

D O U B T S

ON THE

A B O L I T I O N

OF THE

S L A V E T R A D E ;

BY AN

OLD MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT.

Decipitur specie reſi.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR JOHN STOCKDALE, OPPOSITE
BURLINGTON-HOUSE, PICCADILLY.

M,DCC,XC.

[Price Two Shillings and Six-pence.]

P R E F A C E.

THE Abolition of the Slave Trade has been so much and so warmly agitated, that the minds of most men are in some degree prepossessed upon the subject. But if many have formed their opinions as to particular points, few perhaps have considered the whole of the question. It has been the object of the Author to do this in the following sheets; and he only hopes, that if any of his Readers should think him sometimes wrong, they will have the candour to enquire if he is not sometimes right. It seems to him, that any one solid objection should be sufficient to prevent a measure which may

produce such important and extensive consequences, as the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

N. B. The Report published by the Committee of the Privy Council, is cited in the notes with different abbreviations, viz. *Corn. Co. Rep.* and *Priv. Co. Rep.*—And a few passages are cited as being in the Appendixes, which are in the general collections of answers from the islands, to the questions sent by the Privy Council: but these inaccuracies were not discovered till it was too late to correct them.

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D O U B T S

O N T H E

S L A V E T R A D E.

I HAVE read the Report of the Evidence given before the Committee of the Privy-council, and many of the pamphlets published by the Society in the Old Jewry ; I hope I have not less humanity than my neighbours ; I solemnly declare that I have no connection or interest in any trade ; I respect Messrs. Pitt, Fox and Grenville, as three of the ablest men in the kingdom ; and yet I cannot answer it to my country to vote for the abolition of the Slave Trade, unless they shall advance far more satisfactory reasons than any I have yet met with. I will state my Doubts, in the hope of having them satisfied either in or out of the House ; for I feel a prejudice against the very name of Slavery, and wish to be con-

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vinced

vinced that it is our duty, our interest, or in our power, to suppress it.

I shall consider this measure—

1, As required by religion, justice, or humanity.

2, In a mercantile and political view, as it may affect the trade and strength of the nation.

3, If it is likely to attain the ends proposed, and is in fact practicable.

It is not my intention to enter into a long and elaborate defence of the Slave Trade against the charge of Impiety. My more scrupulous readers may find this question fully discussed in the writings of Messrs. Ramfay, Clarkson and Nickolls on one side, and of Messrs. Harris and Francklyn on the other. To me it is clear beyond contradiction, that the keeping of Slaves is allowed and even regulated * in the Old Testament, and not forbidden in any part of the New, though at the introduction of Christianity the practice was too notorious and universal to have been over-

* Leviticus, ch. xxv. v. 44. 46. Exodus, ch. xxi. v. 2. 4.

looked.

looked. The advocates for the abolition insist "that the Old Law was done away
 " by the New, and that the impiety of
 " keeping slaves is to be generally inferred
 " from the mild spirit of Christianity."
 This argument would be good if the keeping of slaves was a part of the Jewish *ceremonial*; but I apprehend the sin (if any) must be *moral* sin; and no moral sin was I believe either permitted by the old or left uncensured in the new law. One writer* indeed goes so far as to say, that—"Believers in divine providence will see much
 " to dread in continuing the Slave Trade,
 " and that the legislature, if it gives an
 " authoritative sanction to this trade, must
 " take upon itself all its consequences, moral, political and judicial, with respect to
 " divine providence." The immediate interposition of Providence in human affairs is a question too dark and difficult for me to discuss; nor does such a discussion seem necessary, or to promise much edification. No nation can now boast of living under a Theocracy; and human governments must be

* See the Rev. Mr. Nickolls's Letter to the Treasurer of the Society in the Old Jewry, p. 26. 32.

directed by human reason, and supported by human means. Such at least is my opinion, and upon this opinion I shall always act. Indeed few political questions are so perfectly clear as to warrant either party in appealing to the judgment of God as a ground of determination,

The Slave Trade is said to be founded in injustice, supported by a constant violation of the natural rights of mankind, and has even been called a system of robbery and murder. This position principally rests upon the favourite assertion—" *that every man has by natural right an unalienable property in his own person.*" But there have been so many undeniable instances in all ages and countries of some men being (though under different names) the purchaseable and inheritable property of others, that *this* natural right seems to be no more exempted from the interference of municipal and national law, than the many other natural rights which have been universally restrained, and upon which restrictions all societies and governments are founded. I know no natural right of an individual which can be opposed to the more important

tant rights of society, and therefore I do not understand how any natural right can be unalienable.

Mr. Clarkson, in the first page of his Essay on Slavery, admits “that customs
 “uniformly practised by barbarous and ci-
 “vilized nations through a long succession
 “of ages afford a presumption that such
 “customs are not only eminently useful,
 “but founded on principles of justice;”
 but then he immediately adds, “that ano-
 “ther argument arises in opposition to this
 “presumption from our feelings for our
 “fellow creatures, and that divine sym-
 “thy which nature has implanted in our
 “breast for the best purposes;” in other
 words, from *an internal consciousness that
 such customs are unjust*. Some men of
 warm hearts and speculative minds may
 perhaps have reasoned or written or talked
 themselves into this opinion; but it cer-
 tainly has not yet been adopted by the
 generality of mankind: such internal con-
 sciousness, unguided by divine or human
 laws, and unenlightened by experience, is
 not a sure rule of conduct to an individual,
 and much less a safe principle of legislation
 and

and government. The internal consciousness of mankind has been often, and (as I think) reasonably urged in proof of the existence of a Deity, but *this* consciousness is supposed to be universal, and is moreover proved by the universal practice of worship: whereas with respect to slavery, the consciousness of its injustice is far from being either apparent or universal, and the practice is most decidedly against it.

Many ingenious but inconclusive arguments have been used to shew that the right of keeping a man in slavery can never have a *just commencement*. But if the enslaving persons of certain descriptions (such as prisoners of war, convicts, or insolvent debtors) is necessary or extensively useful to the society at large, and perhaps beneficial to the persons themselves, such slavery seems to be lawful and just.

Mr. Clarkson has taken some unnecessary pains to prove—"that no *just* man can be "configned to slavery without his own "consent*."—But surely this implies, that

* Essay on Slavery, p. 69.

an *unjust* man may be made a slave *without*, and a just man *with* his own consent.

The right of enslaving prisoners of war has also been denied*. For though it is admitted that where a man has a *right* to kill, he has also a right to enslave; yet it is said, that no man has a right to kill another, except from necessity; but the victor, who takes his enemy prisoner, proves by that very act that there was no *necessity*, and therefore no *right*, to kill him. And it is indeed happy for part of mankind, that the policy and strength of European governments, their forts and frontiers, the improvements in agriculture and commercial intercourse, have produced a change greatly for the better in the ancient law of war: but Africa is not enough civilized, nor at present capable of adopting our ransoms, parols, and cartels†; and as it cannot be

* Clarkson's Essay on Slavery, p. 86. Ramfay's answers to the objections against the abolition, p. 44.

† Des Marchais says—"As I have observed in other parts of this work, the practice of exchanging prisoners is not known in Africa; they have not even any term for it in their language," vol. i. p. 65. vol. ii. p. 189.

supposed that the victor will dismiss a conquered enemy unconditionally, there seems to be no other alternative than slavery or death.

Mr. J. Blackstone has said *, that—" the
 " three origins of slavery assigned by Jus-
 " tinian, (viz. by capture, birth, and sale
 " of his liberty by the person himself) are
 " all built upon false foundations:" but,
 besides that the reasons stated in support of
 this opinion are certainly not unanswerable,
 it is sufficient for the present purpose to
 observe, that Mr. J. Blackstone speaks of
 that slavery only whereby an absolute and
 unlimited power is given to the master
 over the *life* and fortune of the slave. But
 our merchants and planters claim no such
 power; the Africans indeed both claim and
 exercise it; consequently a slave gains by
 being transferred from an African to an
 English master; he is no longer an abso-
 lute, but becomes a qualified and protected
 property; and for this, among other rea-
 sons, I do not see how the Slave Trade

* 1 Comment. ch. 14.

can be condemned as contrary to the principles of justice.

But though slavery, as practised in other ages and countries, may be defensible upon general principles of utility or necessity, yet the advocates for the abolition bill insist that it is unjust in Africa; because there, debtors and delinquents are falsely charged and corruptly condemned, kidnapping is encouraged, and wars are undertaken for the sole purpose of procuring slaves. These are all questions of facts, and should be decided by the evidence that has been produced on both sides. I have considered this evidence with a good deal of attention, but to state and compare it would require a separate work. For my own part, I have no doubt but some slaves are kidnapped and some unjustly condemned; but instances of this sort neither are nor can be frequent*; unless indeed it be taken

* See the evidence of Sir G. Yonge, Adm. Edwards, and of Messrs. Barnes, Matthews, Penny, Eldrid, Heatley, Miles and Anderson. Priv. Co. Rep. part i. tit. Slaves Francklyn's Answer to Clarkson's Essay on Slavery, p. 104, 105.

for granted, that all the witnesses against the bill are interested and incredible, and all the witnesses for it perfectly well informed, unprejudiced and impartial; a presumption which does not appear to be warranted, either by the manner in which the witnesses speak, nor by the matter which their evidence contains.

With respect to the wars in Africa, it has been confidently alledged—" that her kings
 " are never compelled to war, that we can
 " hear of, by public principles—by national glory—still less by the love of their
 " people. In Europe it is the extension of
 " commerce, the maintenance of national
 " honour, or some great public object, that
 " is ever the motive to war with every
 " monarch: but in Africa, it is the personal avarice and sensuality of their kings,
 " and we stimulate and depend upon these
 " vices for the very maintenance of the
 " Slave Trade*." Without inquiring if this is a faithful representation of the military history of Europe, I have sufficient reason

* Mr. Wilberforce's Speech, p. 7.

for believing that in Africa public objects such as commerce, thirst of conquest, disputed successions, &c. &c. have given rise to frequent and bloody wars. I have extracted from different authors accounts of ten wars, which do not appear to have been undertaken for the purpose of procuring slaves*, and of thirty wars which are expressly stated to have been undertaken for other purposes†. And we may further learn from three writers at different periods, none of whom wrote with any view of justifying the Slave Trade, that the Africans are generally so irascible and vindictive, that they are always sufficiently prone to prey upon one another, without

* Leon. Afric. op. ed. Elz. 1632. p. 662. Bosman, p. 20. 32. 61. 68. 70. Churchill's Coll. of Voy. v. 1. p. 73. 729. v. 5. p. 75. 97. 369.

† Leon. Afric. op. p. 644. 650. 654, 655. 658. Bosman, p. 26. 33. 66. 310. 373. Church. Col. v. 1. p. 626. 682. 711. 717. v. 5. p. 39. 88. 111. 123. 175. 182. 389. 493. v. 6. 224. Relation de l'Afrique, Occid. par Labat. v. 2. p. 198, & seq. v. 3. p. 85. v. 4. p. 131 & seq. Voyage du Chev. des Marchais. v. 2, p. 3. Privy Coun. Rep. part 1. tit. Slaves, evidence of Messrs. Devaynes and Matthews. Mr. Miles's evidence at the bar of the House of Commons.

wanting any encouragement from us*. On the other hand, neither in any book, nor in the evidence collected upon the present occasion, is there a single instance of a war clearly and indisputably undertaken for the purpose of procuring slaves. In the treacherous affair at Calabar †, the war was certainly not *begun* at the instigation of the English captains; for if at their arrival on the coast the natives had been living in peace, the trade would have gone on as usual, and there would have been no need

* Bosman—"The greatest part of their wars are occasioned by the recovery of debts, and the disputes of their chief people, p. 150, 151."

Des Marchais—"They make war so frequently, and on such frivolous pretences, that one may almost say they are never at peace. v. 2. p. 189."

Dr. Spaarman, speaking of the Caffres, who have scarce any communication with the Europeans, says,—"The occasion of their wars is generally the same as in other parts of the globe, want of humanity, and their arrogant and rapacious disposition. It is even said, that a stolen or strayed calf, or one grazing upon the territories of a neighbouring country, and other matters equally trifling, will sometimes be sufficient to set two or more nations by the ears." *Voy. to the Cape of Good Hope*, v. 2. p. 153.

† See Capt. Hall's Evidence. Privy Co. Rep. part 1. tit. Government, Religion, &c.

of

of recurring to the shameful expedient related by captain Hall. The information given by Mr. Brue to Sir George Yonge* is not full to the point, nor was Sir George Yonge particular in his inquiries as to the cause of the war. The information seems to amount to nothing more than, that the blacks were going to war, and expected to bring in some slaves.

I have heard it said, that “positive evidence of wars for slaves is not requisite; for that the trade must occasion wars by its very nature and principle; since, as slaves are merchandize that can be procured by wars, it follows that wars will be undertaken to procure them.” This argument would I own have some weight, if it were known or could be reasonably supposed that the greater part, or even many of the slaves, were prisoners of war, or that warfare is the only, or even the easiest and safest mode of procuring them. But from all the evidence I have seen, the very reverse seems to be the fact: most of the slaves are brought from inland markets; and by what means those markets are sup-

* See his evidence. Priv. Co. Rep. part 1. tit. slaves.
plied

plied, neither we nor the black traders on the coast know, at least they will not inform us ; but it appears from the witnesses on both sides, that a very small proportion is understood to be prisoners of war. That there is an easier and safer way of procuring slaves than by wars, is clear from the journeys which the native merchants make from time to time with European goods into the interior country, whence they bring down three, four, or five hundred slaves at a time, which slaves are known to come from markets still further inland. Now admitting it to be *possible* that these slaves may have been kidnapped or captured in war, yet when one considers the regularity of the markets, and the security with which the merchants both go and return, it seems *far more probable* that this kind of traffic is universally allowed and regulated throughout Africa, and that the objects of it are either condemned or born to slavery, and are conscious that resistance on their part would be fruitless and punishable. The inference therefore, that the slaves being merchandise procurable by wars will necessarily occasion wars to procure them, is

is repelled, both by the silence of historians, and the circumstances of the trade. The Slave Trade may have changed the consequences of victory, by substituting slavery to slaughter; but I see no reason to conclude that it has been the cause of wars.

The charge of robbery and murder, contains more sound than sense. These are known definite crimes, consisting of intention and fact, neither of which are proved to be the necessary or usual appendages to the Slave Trade. There are some kidnappers and some pirates, but it does not therefore follow, that slavery and navigation are unlawful. Many slaves may die in the passage, as in the course of a campaign many soldiers may die in the hospitals; but this is misfortune, not crime; and nothing but a desire of perverting all language, and confounding all ideas, of blinding our reason and inflaming our passions, could induce any one to call our merchants and planters robbers and murderers, merely because they are concerned in a trade which has been long encouraged
by

by the laws of this country, as one mean of national prosperity, and immemorially allowed by the custom of Africa.

I have indeed heard it advanced *, that
 “ negroes may be made slaves unjustly,
 “ and yet by no means contrary to the
 “ custom † of Africa.”

Probably no country can boast of a code of laws so perfectly simple and rational, but that some of them will appear unjust to the legislators of other countries. Far be it from me to vindicate all the customs of the Africans, a people uncivilized, and (in my opinion,) vindictive and sanguinary in the extreme. But national customs often arise out of the particular circumstances of the country in which they prevail, and it seems to me that the universal practice of slavery

* Mr. Wilberforce's Speech, p. 51.

† Kidnapping and corrupt judgments cannot properly be called the custom of Africa; for it is abundantly proved in the report, that kidnapping is always punished as a crime, when detected; and that justice is generally fairly administered, according to the law of the country. See the evidence of Messrs. Barnes, Miles, Penny, Weaves, Eldrid, and Dalzell. Priv. Co. Rep. part 1.

in Africa may be accounted for and in great measure justified by its climate, produce and population, the small progress it has made in arts and agriculture, and the natural disposition of the natives. In a country generally well peopled, without national faith, with sufficient property to tempt men to crimes, but without a regular police to prevent them, inhabited by people of ardent passions, thievish dispositions, and filled with strange superstitions; in a country so circumstanced, slavery seems to be the only method of preventing greater evils. Tell an African combatant that “it is unjust to enslave or kill his prisoner,”—he would answer,—“that he had then “conquered in vain, since he has neither “gained reparation for past, nor security against future attacks.”—Forbid an African Court to assign the persons of criminals or insolvent debtors to the injured parties, and it might be asked, “by “what other means could it enforce either “punishment or payment?” is it then unreasonable to maintain that in these instances the practice of slavery is justifiable upon the two important principles of preserving

the lives of individuals, and such a state of society as the Africans have been able to form.

Mr. Clarkson has laboured hard * to persuade his readers that Slavery and Transportation are perfectly unjust both with respect to the criminals and the proportion of the punishment. The passage alluded to is a very enthusiastic declamation in praise of liberty and the love of one's country; but whoever peruses it with a little attention, will detect the following defects and fallacies in his reasoning:

1, Mr. Clarkson, having assumed it as a fact that the administration of justice in Africa is invariably tyrannical and corrupt, infers that the natives have therefore not the *option* of being virtuous †. Now though a mal-administration of justice is certainly a discouragement to virtue, yet it seems a strange position, to maintain that no man can be guilty because the innocent are sometimes condemned.

* Essay on Slavery, part ii. ch. vi.

† Essay on Slavery, in the note, p. 49.

2, Mr. C. says that the punishment bears no proportion to the offence; but as he has taken no distinction between different crimes, his argument proves too much; since, according to him, slavery and transportation would be too severe a punishment even for the most aggravated case of murder.

3, Mr. C. says, this punishment is applied merely to gratify avarice, not to deter others, and to make crimes less frequent: an assertion which is in a great degree refuted by the evidence of many writers*, and the Privy Council's Report †. It is certain that in many parts of Africa the slaves are taught to believe that those, who are sold to the Europeans, are not only transported but are to be eaten at the end of the voyage. A plain proof that the Slave Trade is considered as an exemplary punishment, and as a mean of preventing crimes, since the feller can have no other

* Bosman, p. 342. Barbot. Churchill's Coll. vol. v. p. 272. 339. Labat. Voy. aux Isles. part iv. ch. 7.

† Evidence of Mr. Norris, part i. tit. Government, &c. and of Messrs. Poplett and Newton, tit. Slaves.

motive for representing the lot of the slaves to be worse than it really is. Supposing them to be sold merely for profit, the masters should rather wish to persuade them to bear their fate contentedly, than thus excite groundless apprehensions, which are not unlikely to urge them to flight or suicide.

Since therefore the keeping of slaves is not forbidden, but is rather countenanced by the Law of God, has been established by the laws and practice of many nations the most civilized as well as the most barbarous, may be useful and almost unavoidable in particular countries, and may have even a merciful commencement, there seems to be no ground for supporting in this single instance natural against social rights, or for condemning as universally unjust an established relation in society, which is nearly coëval with society itself.

I shall now proceed to consider the *inhumanity* of the Slave Trade, as well in taking the slaves from their own country, as in the treatment of them both during the passage and in the West Indies.

No man or set of men can form a true estimate of the effects which certain laws, circumstances or situations in life, produce upon the feelings of others. An Englishman, condemned to slavery, would probably find a source of constant misery in the consciousness of being a slave; but an African cannot feel this strong abhorrence from a state which has always been present to his eyes and familiar to his mind: he may at times suffer from the consequences of his situation, but cannot be greatly mortified by the situation itself. A slave in his own country, he is still a slave in the West Indies; but his means of happiness are considerably increased. In Africa his life was held cheap, and at the absolute disposal of his master; he could have nothing like property, was probably contemptuously treated, wretchedly fed, and often punished as severely as in the islands *. In the West Indies his life is protected; food, clothing and assistance in sickness and old age are secured to him by be-

* See the evidence of Sir Geo. Yonge, Messrs. Penny, Poplett, Heatly and Newton. Priv. Cou. Rep. part i. tit. Government, &c. and slaves.

nevolent laws* ; and with moderate industry he may acquire property sufficient to gratify his vanity and his passions. He is probably obliged to work harder than in his own country, but the hours of his labour, and even his punishment are regulated by law ; and to exact reasonable labour from those who have no other means of subsistence has never been deemed inhumanity. Nor do the negroes in the islands neglect these advantages. It is notorious that great numbers of the slaves there are well dressed, able to supply the markets with provisions, and are not unprovided with money †. It is given in evidence ‡, that

* See a view of the principles of the Slave Laws, Priv. Co. Rep. part iii.

† See Observations on the Slave Trade, p. 29, 30-33, and an Answer to Mr. Clarkson's Essay on Slavery, p. 197, 238. both by Mr. Francklyn.

‡ See the evidence of Ld. Rodney, Sir Pet. Parker, Adm. Barrington, Sir Josh. Rowley and Adm. Hotham, Adm. Edwards and Sir Geo. Yonge. Priv. Co. Rep. part iii. tit. Further Evidence, &c. It has been said that—"in cases like this, an admiral's evidence is perhaps the very worst that can be taken, for that the sight of the admiral would no doubt exhilarate their faces."—But I presume most of these admirals were so often on shore, that their appearance could
not

that they do not appear to be either unhappy, or overworked, or *cruelly* punished *. I do not therefore see that the transporting African Slaves from their own country to our islands, is an act of inhumanity, since most of them may and very many do in fact profit by the change.

The mode of conveying the slaves from Africa to the West Indies has been the theme of much obloquy and of many disgusting descriptions; and it would perhaps be more tedious than difficult to detect some improbabilities in the facts, and some exaggeration in the manner of stating them. But when one considers that the object of the trade is to transport many thousands of men from their own country to another, wholly unknown and not favourably re-

not always make an holiday: especially as it appears that these gentlemen had seen the slaves in sickness, at work, and even under actual punishment.

* I do not wish to suppress that there is evidence also of cruel punishments. But particular instances of cruelty happen in all countries.—I quote the evidence of the admirals only to shew that the *general* treatment of the slaves did not appear to them to be inhuman.

ported

ported to them ; in a state of slavery to masters of a different country, language, and manners ; the very nature of the thing (independent of any evidence) creates a reasonable presumption that there will happen occasional instances of severity and suffering. But the immediate interest of the masters*, in the good condition of the slaves, does also afford a reasonable presumption that such instances will not be frequent ; and it appears in evidence †, that these

* Mr. Norris says,—“ The emoluments of the captains depend greatly upon the good condition of the slaves, for their wages are no higher than in other trades, but they have a commission of nearly 6 per cent. on the amount of the sales.”—Capt. Hall says, —“ The command of a ship in this trade is the most lucrative of any, except the India Trade.”—*See their evidence*, Priv. Co. Rep. part ii.

By 29 G. III. c. 66. s. 11, the master is intitled to a bounty of 100l. and the surgeon 50l. if they lose no more than 2 slaves per cent.—and 50l. and 25l. if not more than 3 per cent. are lost.

† Barbot says,—“ The slaves in the passage used to divert themselves on the deck, and seemed highly pleased.” Churchill’s Coll. vol. v. p. 546.

Capt. Phillips says,—“ When we come to sea we take their irons off; for the only danger of a mutiny is whilst they are in sight of the coast ; but once out of sight, out of mind.” Churchill’s Coll. vol. vi. p. 229.

Mr.

these odious circumstances are by no means necessarily and inseparably connected with the trade. The sufferings and mortality of the negroes in the passage seem to be principally caused by epidemical diseases and adverse weather; and it may well be expected that the bad effects of both will be in a great degree obviated by the act* lately passed for regulating this trade; for the having fewer men on board, more stowage for provisions and water, and more room for cleanliness and a free circulation of air, are approved means of preventing diseases and promoting their cure.

The regulations introduced by this act are still open to improvement. Many persons are of opinion that small ships are more healthy than large ones, and that the

Mr. Heatly says,—“The slaves are soon in good spirits.”

Mr. Dalzell has often taken the irons off many of his slaves.

Mr. Penny has gone so far as to discipline them on board his ship as marines, and trusted them with arms. *See their evidence. Priv. Co. Rep. part ii.*

* 29 G. III. c. 66.

epidemical diseases are frequently caused by the ship's remaining too long on the coast: should more exact observation justify these opinions, it may be proper (giving the merchants due notice) to limit both the tonnage and the time. The advocates for the Abolition Bill confidently affirm*,—“ that it is absolutely *impossible* to regulate “ the Slave Trade;”—and their assertion *may* indeed be grounded on a thorough investigation of the subject; but it *may also* proceed from inconsiderate vehemence, or even from an apprehension that successful regulations may weaken their cause: and when I am told that,—“ *Regulate murder “ as you please, it still remains murder*†,”—I plainly perceive an attempt to mislead and impose upon me. For whoever uses this position as an argument, assumes the very point in dispute, substitutes one thing in the room of another, viz. Murder for Slave-dealing, and then forms his conclusion by supposing them to be one and the same:—“ Regulate Slave-dealing as you please, it

* Mr. Wilberforce's Speech, p. 51, 52.

† Objections to the Abolition, with answers, by Mr. Ramfay, p. 79.

“ will

“ will still be Slave-dealing, but it will
 “ not be murder.” To abolish the trade
 at once would clearly be the shortest way,
 and save us much time and trouble : but
 it is our duty to save something more,—*the*
interests of our country,—and to try every
 possible method of maintaining them ; for
 it would be highly unworthy of the legisla-
 ture to sacrifice an extensive and (as it seems
 to me) a profitable branch of commerce, to
 the clamour of theoretic humanity, or ar-
 dle impatience of delay.

With respect to the treatment of slaves
 in the islands ; it would be to no purpose
 to enter into an examination of the several
 instances of real or supposed ill usage charg-
 ed upon the planters, either in the Com-
 mittee’s Report or elsewhere. The facts are
 stated in so general a manner that it is im-
 possible to meet them with evidence, and
 equally impossible to distinguish between the
 cases of wanton cruelty and justifiable severity.
 But in truth, the question is not whether the
 power of the master over the slave has
 been abused, but by what means and to
 what degree it may be best and most safe-
 ly prevented. I therefore leave the disgust-

ing detail of punishments and sufferings to the friends of the Abolition Bill; they are well practised in the use of those topics; and have long and artfully laboured, by well-worded and affecting descriptions, to draw the public attention from the true points of consideration, viz, the necessity, probable effects and practicability of the bill; or at least to represent them as only secondary objects, when compared with the stronger and more important claim of humanity.

The most obvious and compleat method of relieving slaves is, by emancipation. But it seems agreed, on all sides, that such a measure would be detrimental to the state, ruinous to the planters, and dangerous and destructive to the slaves themselves,

The next method which naturally occurs is, to insure by laws a sufficient maintenance for the slave, and protection against unreasonable labour and punishment. Let the reader look into the laws respecting negroes in Jamaica and Grenada*; he will there see how much has been done towards

* Priv. Co. Rep. part 3.

the attainment of these desirable objects *. And I appeal to these laws with
the

* In Jamaica, by f. 2 and 4, every owner of lands shall (under a penalty of 50*l.*) allow a sufficient quantity of land to every negro for his maintenance, and allow him sufficient time to work the same; and shall plant for provisions one acre to every ten negroes, over and above the negro-grounds aforesaid; and where the owner has no lands proper for the above purposes, shall make ample provision for all his slaves; and shall annually give them sufficient clothing to be approved of by the justices and vestry of the parish. And by 36, every owner or his representative, shall give in to the justices and vestry *upon oath*, under the penalty of 50*l.* an account of the quantity of land in ground provisions, and (where no land) of the provision or means adopted for the maintenance of his slaves, and of the nature and quantity of clothing given to each negro. And by f. 3, shall keep any of his slaves, incapable of service, with the wholesome necessities of life, under a penalty of 10*l.*

By f. 12, any person, who shall wantonly or cruelly whip, beat, &c. or confine without sufficient support, any slave, shall be subject to be indicted and punished by fine and imprisonment. By f. 13, no slave shall receive more than ten lashes at one time, unless the owner, or his immediate representative, having such slave in his care, be present: and no owner or representative shall punish a slave with more than thirty nine lashes at one time, and for one offence, under the penalty of 5*l.* By f. 17, the slaves shall (except in
crop

the more confidence, because the committee of council has expressly declared,
 “ That

crop time,) have one day in every fortnight to cultivate their grounds, exclusive of Sundays and the three great festivals. By s. 18, no slave shall work in the field before five in the morning, nor after seven in the evening, (except in crop time,) and one half-hour shall be allowed for breakfast, and two hours for dinner, under the penalty of 10 *l*.

Grenada. The laws of this island are, in the articles of provisions, punishments, and hours of work, almost *verbatim* the same : but by s. 5, the clothing is specified to be, a hat, jacket, shirt, trowsers, and two blankets per annum. By s. 8, the rectors shall visit the estates in their parishes every three months, to instruct them in religion, and exhort them to attend divine worship ; any rector neglecting, to forfeit 20*l*. By s. 4, every owner of a plantation, shall provide a wholesome hospital for the sick, with proper attendants ; and also provide for every head of a family a comfortable house, in a healthy situation, and a bed to sleep upon. By s. 9, any master having carnal knowledge of any of his female married slaves, shall forfeit for every offence 165*l*. An attorney, overseer, tradesman, or other free person so offending on the estate where he resides, shall forfeit half of his wages ; any stranger or visitor so offending, shall forfeit 50*l*. and lastly, every year, three gentlemen of every parish shall be appointed guardians of the slaves, who are to be sworn to see these laws duly and fully executed, and are for that purpose vested with powers of visiting all estates, &c.
 inspecting

“ That in these islands, the wish to soften
 “ the rigours of their (the slaves) situation,
 “ has manifested itself most decidedly.
 “ Measures have been devised by the legis-
 “ latures of these islands, for placing them
 “ in a state of society, where they will be
 “ intitled to a *protection* that in former
 “ times would have been thought incom-
 “ patible with the dependence and subor-
 “ dination of slavery *.”

If these laws are thought to be sufficiently
 protective, let it be recommended to all the
 other islands to adopt them †. If humanity
 has

inspecting the grounds, and of examining the principal
 manager or overseer of any estate upon oath.

* See the view of the principles of the slave laws by
 the committee of council. Priv. Co. Rep. part 3.

† The legislature of Antigua in its instructions to
 its agents says—“ If it is objected by any of his Ma-
 “ jesty’s ministers, or by any member of either House,
 “ that no law hath been yet passed in this island for
 “ the better regulation and comfort of slaves, we desire
 “ that you will on our part assert, that the omission has
 “ not proceeded from wilful inattention, or neglect of
 “ a subject, which the people of Great Britain now
 “ consider of such very great importance; but from
 “ our unwillingness to do any thing in our present
 “ critical situation which may have the appearance of
 “ deceit,

has still its fears, let others be proposed: add the clause mentioned by Mr. Francklyn, which is a part of the present slave law in Maryland*; or introduce the dispossessing law of the Danish islands, which is mentioned by Mr. Ramsay himself, as an *effectual* method of securing proper treatment to the slaves †. Or if it should be judged that

“deceit, or induce the parliament to suppose that the
 “charges of cruelty and oppression, with which the
 “West India colonies have been so unjustly loaded,
 “had any real foundation in truth; or that by im-
 “mediately passing specious laws to regulate the con-
 “duct of the masters, we wish to avert an enquiry into
 “the real state and condition of the slaves!” From
 such sentiments we may be assured, that every humane
 recommendation from this country will be instantly
 complied with.

* If any master shall cruelly misuse or ill-treat any slave, or willingly permit any overseer, &c. under whose direction such slave shall be placed, to misuse, &c. such master shall be obliged to sell such slave at public outcry; the money to be paid to mortgagees, or bond creditors, if any; if none, to be disposed of by the direction of the legislature. Francklyn's Observation on the Slave Trade, p. 82.

† The governor divests a cruel master of the management of his property, and sets humane people over it: a custom truly worthy of imitation; and the only
 effectual

that the due *execution* of these laws is not sufficiently provided for, devise some better method (if there can be any better) than that of sworn guardians * to carry them into effect. But if the friends of the Abolition Bill, should still persist in maintaining that these means are all insufficient, and yet admit that they can suggest no better, it is in substance saying that there shall be no slavery, though they will not venture to advance such a position in express terms.

It will here be answered that a better method is offered in the Abolition Bill, which will act as a general compulsory law for general good treatment. We are assured that this law alone will inspire the masters with a constant motive for behaving well,
 “ in those many points in which it is im-
 “ possible for any particular law to come
 “ between a master and his slave†; will
 “ annihilate all the causes of the diminution

effectual method to secure proper treatment to the slaves. Objections to the Abolition, with answers, by Ramsey, p. 66.

* As in the laws of Grenada, ante.

† Mr. Ramsey's Answers to Objections, p. 66.

“ of slaves*; and is the only possible *stimulus*, whereby a regard to population, and consequently to the happiness of the negroes can be effectually excited †.”

And what is this all-powerful *stimulus*, whose certain and uniform operation is thus to reform the minds and morals of masters, managers and slaves? to fructify the soil, regulate the seasons, baffle the rage of epidemic disease‡, and prevent the baleful effects of a tropical hurricane§, or a seven year's drought in Antigua||?—no punish-

* Clarkson's Essay on the Impolicy of the Slave Trade, p. 94.

† Mr. Wilberforce's Speech, p. 53.

‡ In 1779, nearly a fifth part of all the slaves in Antigua were taken off by the dysentery. Council of the Island. See Priv. Co. Rep. Antigua A. No. 15.

§ The committee of the assembly in Jamaica, in their second report, estimate the loss of negroes by hurricanes, and their immediate consequences, from 1780 to 1786, at 15,000. Com. Co. Rep. Jamaica append. p. 3.

|| “ For more than seven years has this unhappy colony been visited with a drought, the severity of which cannot be more justly described, than by a detail of the disappointments and misery it has produced.” Petition from the council and assembly of Antigua. See Com. Co. Rep. part 5. Antigua append. C.

ment

ment, no penalty, no prosecution ; but a mere pecuniary interest : not certain and obvious, but contingent, and depending on a nice calculation of the probability of a life. It is assumed that a knowledge of the suppression of supplies from Africa, and the increased value of every slave's life, will raise so quick a sense of interest in the minds of masters and managers too *, that though their slaves may prefer play to work, though they may desert the field or the mill for a dance or a drinking-bout, yet is it ever to be borne in mind, that they must be well kept, kindly treated, and seldom punished, lest they destroy themselves or fly into the woods †, and thus reduce a stock which can be no more recruited : And do we know so little of the weakness of reason, when assailed by passion, as to believe, that the fear of a slave committing suicide, or dying at the end of nine years instead of ten, will ever restrain the thoughtless profusion of a vain spendthrift, or the keen resentment of a jealous debauchee; the infatuation of a determined gamester, or the

* Mr. Wilberforce's Speech, p. 28.

† Clarkson's Essay on the Impol. p. 93.

impatience of a mind suffering under the perpetual irritation of embarrassed circumstances? It is to be hoped such masters are not very numerous; but it is against such only that the protective laws are wanted; under men of substance, morality, and prudence, the slaves may expect, and (I have no doubt) do actually receive proper treatment. Besides, "It is the pressure of
 " the moment that directs arbitrary power,
 " not distant consequences* : It is im-
 " mediate and present, not future and distant
 " interest, however real, that is apt to ac-
 " tuate us †."—The description is just; but does it aptly suit the interest to be created by the Abolition Bill? the friends to the bill will maintain the affirmative; they will insist, "That the want of supply being *an-*
 " *nu*al, the interest must operate within the
 " year, and is therefore sufficiently im-
 " mediate and direct:" but there seems to me no probability that the want of supply should operate so soon; for although it is better both for masters and slaves that there should be an opportunity of purchasing

* Ramsey's Answer to Objections, p. 66.

† Mr. Wilberforce's Speech, p. 24.

every year, yet the interruption of the supply for any single year would (I presume) be scarce felt.

Let us suppose the annual loss upon a hundred negroes to be three. The ninety seven negroes will do the work of the hundred without perceiving the difference: so perhaps may the ninety four in the second year: and even the ninety one may get through the work of the third year tolerably well, especially if there happens to be only a middling crop. Hitherto then the produce has not failed for want of hands. The planter may have some occasional alarms at seeing the annual decrease of his stock, and no African supplies; but he flatters himself with the hope, that the surviving negroes may be more healthy and long-lived, or that they may go on at least as well as they have done, or that he may pick up some in the islands; above all, he considers that his business has been done, and shall be done as long as possible. Is it not obvious that very many planters will act and reason in this manner? and if they do, where is the *immediate and present interest*,

terest which is at all times, and under all circumstances, to enforce the absolute necessity of moderate work and kind treatment?

I will now shew an interest which is *really* immediate and present, and directly opposite to that intended to be created by the Abolition Bill. Suppose an embarrassed planter to have lost in two years, from the passing of the Abolition Bill, six or seven slaves out of his stock of one hundred; his creditors are troublesome, a war has raised the price of provisions 25 or 30 per cent. his provision-grounds have considerably failed, but his canes have escaped and the crop is abundant.—This case, with all its circumstances, will be allowed to be far from improbable.—Here then, either the slaves must be over-worked and sparingly fed, or provisions must be bought at an enormous price, and part of the crop lost for want of hands. Now is it to be believed that a man so circumstanced will from any apprehension of future loss accept the second alternative? or that the idea of not being able to replace his slave from Africa, will be so immediate and present
to

to his mind, as the *pressure of the moment*, and the desire of quieting his creditors and securing his crop? Even in this country, would a farmer suffer a single acre of wheat to rot on the ground, whilst he could procure one hand or foot to move for him? yet here is no material inequality of crops; but in the islands the difference in value is often treble or quadruple between the crops of different years*: The planter therefore will naturally exert his slaves to the utmost to house what is actually upon the land, and trust to the rest of the year for recruiting them by good keeping and rest: Meanwhile the mischief is done; the excessive exertion reduces still more the effective stock; no supply is to be got from Africa; the surviving stock, and consequently the births (which are expected to cure all these evils) must naturally decrease; and with great rapidity too, in case there should be two or three abundant crops

* I understand the crops in most of the islands may, in the course of ten years, be estimated at

- 2 Abundant
- 6 Middling, or seasonable
- 2 Nearly or wholly failing.

shortly

shortly after the act, and before its effects appear (if they ever should appear) in a new generation.

I hope my reader will not think that I have dwelt too long on this part of the argument. The pretence of creating an increased interest in the slaves welfare, and an absolute and immediate necessity of better treatment, is the main hinge and vital principle of the Abolition Bill, as far as it concerns the slaves now in the islands. If therefore I have proved this pretence to be ill-founded, it follows that the bill is so far useless and unequal to one of its principal objects. Indeed, whether it succeeds or not, it seems to me at present a most violent and desperate remedy, applied to a disease apparently wearing itself out : it would be the adopting of a measure, which professes to compel the planters to use their slaves well at the very time when they are disposed to use them well without compulsion*, and when the treatment of the slaves is acknowledged to be improving every day†.

* See Privy Councils Report, part iii. titled, View of the Principles of the Slave Laws.

† Mr. Wilberforce's Speech, p. 28 and 29.

But

But whatever may be the treatment of the slaves, either in the passage or the islands, we have been told*, that “there is one species of evidence absolutely infallible; death, at least, is a sure ground of evidence: and it will be found, upon an average of all the ships of which evidence has been given at the Privy Council, that, *exclusive of those who perish before they sail, not less than 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ per. cent. perish in the passage; the Jamaica Reports tells us, that no less than 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ per. cent. die on shore before the day of sale; and one third more dies in the seasoning; but of this last mortality the diseases contracted on ship-board, and the mischievous tricks used to make them up for sale, are (as the Jamaica Report states) the principal causes.”.*

I have compared this estimate with the evidence in the Report of the Privy Council, and do not think it is by any means established.

* Mr. Wilberforce's Speech, p. 16.

For, 1. There does not seem to be a single expression in the evidence which should lead one to suppose that the accounts furnished by the witnesses are confined to the slaves lost in the *passage* only; on the contrary, it seems clear to me that the witnesses speak of the *whole* number *lost*, out of the *whole* number *shipped*.

2. The loss of slaves in the passage, on an average of all the ships given in evidence, instead of being *not less* than $12\frac{1}{2}$ per. cent. does not amount to quite 10 per. cent*.

3. It

* The five following witnesses have exactly specified their numbers and loss.

	<i>Slaves shipped.</i>	<i>lost.</i>
Mr. Arnold, - - - - -	206	19
Hall, - - - - -	560	110
James, - - - - -	450	230
Norris, - - - - -	2175	78
Penny, - - - - -	2576	110

The medium of the numbers stated by the following witnesses, stands as under.

Mr. Eldrid made three voyages, and carried from 140 to 150 (say 125) slaves each voyage; and lost about 70 in the first, and between 20 and 30 (say 25) in each of the other voyages.

435	120
<hr/>	
6402	667
	Mr.

3. It is certain that the Committee of Assembly in Jamaica, has stated a loss of $4\frac{1}{2}$ per

Slaves ship'd. lost.
6402 667

Mr. Newton made three voyages, and took about 220 slaves on an average; lost one third (say 74) in the first, very few (say 10) in the second, and none in the third. - - - - - - 660 84

Mr. Falconbridge made three voyages; in the first took 105 slaves and lost 40; in the second, about 380 and lost upwards of an hundred (say 110); in the third 420 and lost 39. - - - - 950 189

Mr. Dalzell in one voyage took 440 slaves, and lost near a third (say 147); in a second 360 and lost about a fourth (say 90), in a third, 106; and in a fourth voyage about 160 or 170 (say 165), and lost about 5 per cent. on both cargoes. - - - - - - 1071 250

Mr. Heatly having been in the trade from 1763 to 1788, may have made 15 voyages. His ships were from 90 to 250 (say 150) tons, generally took two slaves to a ton, (say 3 slaves to 2 tons) say 225 slaves each; he traded from Gambia, and thinks 5 per. cent. a large mortality from that part of the coast; he never lost more than 11, and

9083 1190
 then

4½ per. cent. between the time of arrival and sale of the slaves: But it is also certain, that the Committee betrays a most anxious desire to swell the loss on board of the ships, for the purpose of lessening the mortality imputed to bad treatment in the islands *. The only document produced in support of this statement, is an extract from the books of Mr. Lindo, a

	<i>Slaves ship'd.</i>	<i>lost.</i>
	9083	1190
then he had 280 slaves on board; say		
then 15 voyages, at 225 each voyage,		
and 5 per. cent. loss. - - - - -	3375	169
Mr. Anderson made seven or eight (say		
7) voyages, took from 300 to 350 (say		
325) slaves; can safely say he never		
lost more than 15 in each voyage. -	2275	105
Mr. Bowen made one voyage, took		
between 230 and 250 (say 240), and		
lost none. - - - - -	240	000
Mr. Gandy made two voyages, took		
270, and says he lost a good many,		
but on this evidence I would not un-		
dertake to form any estimate.		

14973 1464

10 per. cent. on 14973 is 1493, that is 29 more than the number stated to have been lost.

* See this report in the Privy Councils Rep. part iii, tit. Jamaica Appendix.

slave-

slave-factor ; by which it appears, that out of seven thousand eight hundred and seventy-three slaves, consigned to him in the course of three years, there died, between entry and sale, three hundred and sixty-three, or about $4\frac{1}{2}$ per. cent. of which number, one hundred and forty-seven, out of five hundred and twenty, died on board of one ship ; a mortality which I suspect to be so very extraordinary, that it ought not to serve as any part of the data for an average estimate.—Upon this single document the Committee of assembly has estimated the average loss to be $4\frac{1}{2}$ per. cent. between the entry and sale of all the slaves imported since the conquest of the island, amounting to no less a number than six hundred and seventy-six thousand two hundred and seventy-six. The Committee has indeed added, “ That they conceive, *on many accounts*, this allowance to be moderate.” But as no other reason or evidence is offered, as seven thousand eight hundred and seventy-three seem to be too small a number to support an average estimate on six hundred and seventy-six thousand two hundred and seventy-six, and as the Com-
mittee

mittee apparently considered themselves to be interested in the question, their opinion upon this point can have but little weight.

4. The calculation, that one third of the slaves sold dies in the seasoning, i. e. within two years, is corroborated by the difference of the price between a newly imported and a native negro ; but it seems to be agreed on all hands, that the diseases contracted on ship-board, and the malpractices used in preparing the slaves for sale, are the principal causes of this mortality, which it may be expected will be greatly diminished by the operation of the Regulation Act ; as the limiting the number of slaves to be taken on board, must give room to introduce many precautions for their health and comfort.

This argument against the Slave Trade, drawn from a loss of human life beyond the ordinary course of nature, led me to consider, if the abolition* of the trade would
probably

* I mean a *general* abolition both in Europe and America ; for I presume it will be allowed me—that if our abolition should only transfer the trade from Great Britain

probably put an end to, or greatly lessen this loss: and from all the accounts of Africa and its inhabitants, I think there appears but too much reason to apprehend that the abolition may occasion more mortality and inhumanity than it will probably prevent.

There can be no doubt but slavery is a very common condition in life throughout Africa; and if any credit is due to history, the following facts are proved beyond dispute.

1. Famines are frequent in this country * ; and indeed, without *proof*, they might easily be presumed to happen in regions

Britain to other nations, the Africans would not be at all benefited, nor the cause of humanity in the smallest degree advanced.

* Leo Africanus, speaking of part of Negroland, says, “ horum animi vilitati *Inedia* quædam sese adjungit. Ed. Elz. p. 652.” Barbot says,—“ The people are often swept away by famines. In 1681 many thousands were destroyed by a famine, and many sold themselves for food; yet I was told this was not to be compared to the famine in 1641 and 1642.” Churchill’s Collection, v. 5, p. 33.

Labat

gions situated within the torrid zone, ignorantly and indolently cultivated, subject to the extremes of drought, rain, and inundations, and swarming with clouds of destructive insects.

2. Besides frequent wars between neighbouring states, hords of savages have from time to time over-run whole countries

Labat says,—“ That Mr. Brue bought many “ Bombaras slaves in very bad condition; there had “ been a famine, and the merchants had lost many for “ want of food.” *Hist. de l’Afrique, Occid.* v. 3, p. 359. (M. Brue was in Africa between 1692 and 1714). In Whydah, one barren year occasions an incredible famine, so that freemen have sometimes discharged their slaves, and even sold themselves for victuals. *Barbot, Churchill’s Collection*, v. 5. p. 329.

In the 15th century there was so dreadful a famine on the Gold Coast, and the market for slaves was so over-stocked, that the Portuguese merchants had not ships to transport them. Many of the great men and princes sold themselves for slaves to the Portuguese. *Mod. Univ. Hist.* v. 16, p. 157.

In 1675 the natives of the Senegal and Gambia experienced a most calamitous famine. Men sold themselves, their wives and children for food; and they not only sold, but devoured one another, *Mod. Univ. Hist.* v. 17. p. 323.

In 1706, Broek saw many slaves bought for about an hatfull of wheat each; and the famine was so great that parents sold their children for slaves.

in irresistible numbers; when thousands of prisoners have been killed to propitiate their gods, to do honour to their generals, or to feast the soldiers*.

3. The

* A commander of Giaghis, having, with the assistance of the Portuguese, obtained a victory over the Sognese, proposed that the prisoners should be killed and eaten. Churchill's Collection, vol. i. p. 683.

The Giaghis and inhabitants of Anfiko, are always engaged in wars with the other blacks, and are known to be cannibals. Churchill's Collection, vol. v. p. 479.

Without the city of San Salvador in Congo, is the Pombo, or Great Market, built by the Giaghis, where human flesh used to be sold; but the Portuguese chose to have the slaves alive. Churchill's Collection, vol. i. p. 729.

In their private quarrels, when the negroes fight, the prisoners become slaves to the conquerors. Churchill's Collection, vol. i. p. 710. But in their national wars, all the prisoners are beheaded. ib. vol. v. p. 493.

When the natives of the Bissaos islands are at war, if any of their own party are killed they seldom sell any prisoners, but kill them all in revenge; otherwise they sell part, always reserving some as a sacrifice to their gods. Labat. Afr. Occid. vol. v. p. 133. 139. 168.

Dr. Spaarman, speaking of the Caffres, who have no slave trade, and (as I understand) no intercourse with the Europeans, says,—“It is said, they are frequently
“at war with one another, and always kill the prisoners.” Vol. ii. p. 153.

3. The wives and slaves of the deceased are sacrificed at the funerals of their husbands*.

4. These sacrifices of prisoners and slaves have decreased since the natives have found the advantage of selling them to the Europeans†.

But

Lambe's letter in Smith's book and Snaigrave, contain full accounts of the cruelties committed by the king of Dahomey's generals, in the conquest of Whydah.

* The notoriety of this practice, makes it unnecessary to cite any authorities in proof of it.

† All the Africans speak of the Giaghis, and people of Anfiko, as cannibals, who are continually at war, and always eat both the slain and the prisoners, unless they can sell them to advantage. Churchill's Collection, vol. v. p. 479.

The inhabitants of the Bissaos isles kill all their prisoners of war, if any of their own party have been killed; otherwise they sell them; but always reserving some as a sacrifice to their gods. Labat. Aft. Occid. vol. v. 133. 139. 168.

The inhabitants of Cape Mesurado are said to have formerly sacrificed their prisoners to the sun; but since they have found out a way to get rid of them to advantage, by selling them to the Europeans, these sacrifices have ceased. Des Marchais, vol. i. p. 101.

The custom of strangling slaves at their master's funeral begins to lose ground in Sierra Leone, as well

But supposing the Slave Trade wholly at an end, what is to become of the one hundred thousand slaves now annually taken out of the hands of their African masters?

as in other places. Churchill's Collections, vol. v. p. 121.

At Aquasson (W. of C. Corfo,) is a market where the blacks buy slaves to be killed at the funerals of their kings, *ib.* p. 172.

The inland inhabitants of the east-side of the River Calabar are reported to eat the slain, and bring their prisoners down to New Calabar for sale; but if a prisoner is sick, they do not try to cure him, but kill him for a public feast. *ib.* 381.

In the Bissaos isles, the king's favourite wives and slaves are sacrificed at his funeral; but lately this custom is almost abolished. Labat. *Afr. Occid.* vol. v. p. 128. 137.

The king of Dahomey told Mr. Norris, that he should order some prisoners, whom Mr. Norris refused to buy, to be killed. *Priv. Co. Rep.* part i. tit. Government, &c.

Mr. Matthews, who has resided two years in Sierra Leone, and speaks the language, was told that they formerly killed their prisoners; but this practice has now ceased. *ib.* tit. Slaves.

Snelgrave saw the bodies of many hundred prisoners who had been sacrificed to attend the king's wives in the other world. The king himself chose others to be offered up to their gods; and he gave as a reason for choosing old men, that the Europeans would not buy them on account of their age, p. 494.

is it possible not to infer the future from the past? or is this inference rendered improbable by any apparent change in the climate of Africa, or the character of it's people? The temptation of exchanging prisoners of war, adulterers, forcerers, &c. being taken away, the former bloody consequences, of conquest, revenge, superstition and famine, will of course revive; murder and sacrifices will be recurred to as political and necessary expedients; the only ready means of getting rid of those whom they dare not set free, and cannot maintain *.

* Mr. Baggs has given in evidence (Priv. Co. Rep. part i. tit. Slaves) that "It has happened when the
 " marauding parties have come down and found no
 " ships at the water side, they have killed their captives
 " rather than send them back or be at the expence of
 " maintaining them."—I myself doubt the truth of this information, which was given to Mr. Baggs by some of the black traders; but admitting it to be true, as prisoners fairly taken would be equally expensive to maintain, they would probably meet the same fate; and whatever may have been said of kidnapping and false accusations, a man must be strangely prejudiced, or incredulous, who does not believe that so extensive a country as Africa must annually produce thousands of prisoners of war, and convicts justly enslaved according to the laws there established.

I know

I know it has been said, that these accounts of famines, sacrifices and cannibalism, are mere misrepresentations or fictions; I have therefore given my authorities, and every reader may judge for himself.

I shall now conclude my first division of the subject, with observing, that humanity and justice are great and amiable virtues; and the moralist and divine can find no difficulty in enforcing the practice of them as important duties; but when they are appealed to as the first and only principles for enacting or repealing any particular law; it greatly behoves us to understand them rightly, and apply them wisely, and especially to guard against animated appeals to the passions, and the immediate impulse of sensibility: for even the good passions, when called into action, or irritated by opposition, partake of the frailty of our nature; and humanity and piety (as well as cruelty and avarice), may at times be tempted to misrepresent or pervert the truth.

In considering the Slave Trade in a political and mercantile point of view, I will endeavour

endeavour to separate, as much as possible, the objections made to the continuance of the trade from those which may be suggested against the abolition of it.

This trade is said to be unprofitable. First to our merchants, who are charged with “persevering in it merely from a spirit of gambling; for that it is upon the whole a *losing* trade, and is indeed nothing more or less than a commercial lottery*.” But a lottery, though disadvantageous to the bulk of adventurers, is certainly advantageous to the state, otherwise lotteries would not have been adopted at different times by all administrations: so this trade must surely be in some shape beneficial to the country, or it would never have been so frequently encouraged by the legislature, and so warmly defended by the planters, who are more immediately concerned. And if it be beneficial upon the whole, it may be as impolitic to prohibit this trade as to prohibit all lotteries.

* Clarkson’s Impolicy of the Slave Trade, p. 25, 26.

But

But the planters are said to mistake their own interests, for that it is a losing trade to *them* too; and “ every planter who “ keeps up his stock of slaves by purchasing instead of breeding, must be ruined.”

To prove this, Mr. Ramfay delivered to the Privy Council *, a calculation of the loss and profit on ten purchased slaves: wherein, having computed the prime cost, loss in seasoning, maintainance, &c. and taken Mr. Long’s estimate, of two hogsheds of sugar to every three slaves, as the produce of their labour, he asserts a loss of 100l. per ann. on every ten purchased slaves.—I own myself to be not sufficiently informed upon the subject to sift the *data* of this calculation; but it seems to be imperfect in many respects; and there is one part of it in particular which prevents me assenting to the conclusion. Mr. Long, in his estimate of two hogsheds to every three slaves, clearly proportions the quantity of sugar to *all* the slaves on a plantation, old and young, serviceable and unserviceable. But when a planter has bought ten slaves, and lost (say)

* See Priv. Co. Rep. part iii. tit. Further evidence, &c.

four in the seasoning, the remaining six must be supposed to be all able field negroes, who will consequently raise much more than four hogheads; since in a stock of one hundred negroes there are seldom fifty who are equal to the laborious parts of the cultivation of the cane.

But, independent of particular calculations, we all know that many West Indian estates have supported the owners from father to son in ease and affluence, though their stocks of slaves have been constantly recruited by purchases. How can we reconcile this with the notion of such purchases being a certain and regular loss? Besides, the Slave Trade has been carried on upon a very extensive scale for many, perhaps fifty or sixty years; and it appears hardly credible that a great number of merchants should persevere through a long course of years in selling, and a far greater number of planters in buying the same commodity, and yet all parties be losers by the trade. The French, the Spaniards and the Dutch are equally eager to share the trade; do they lose by it too? Mr. Ramsay tells us*,

* Objections to the abolition, with answers, p. 54.

—“ that

—“ that the French islands, being more
 “ fertile, can bear a more expensive cultiva-
 “ tion, and their slaves, being better kept *,
 “ are *less* unproductive (for they too *are*
 “ unproductive) than ours.” But then
 keeping them dearer, and buying them
 dearer (as I am informed the French do)
 should seem to bring the French in some
 degree upon a level with our own planters.
 —The Spaniards are said “ to have large
 “ tracts of uncultivated lands ; that those in
 “ cultivation are not nearly stocked, and
 “ *therefore* they are glad to buy slaves.”
 But supposing *our* planters *cultivated* estates
 to be fully stocked, yet in Jamaica alone
 there are 2,350,000 acres of cultivable land

* M.d'Auberteuil expressly says, that—“ the English
 “ exact less labour from their negroes, and are at
 “ greater expence in maintaining them.” *Considérations sur l'état de la colonie Française de St. Dominique.*
vol. 1. p. 45. (N.B. This work was published by au-
 thority, and its veracity has never been impeached); if
 this be really so, it strengthens my argument upon Mr.
 Ramsay's principles. For he argues thus: “ the French
 “ lose less by their purchased slaves, because they keep
 “ them better;”—consequently, if they do on the con-
 trary keep them worse, they must lose more by them
 than we do, and should therefore be less willing to pur-
 chase.

uncultivated * ; so that hitherto the state of the Spanish islands, in point of cultivation, can make no difference ; and I am left to conclude, that both French and Spaniards are as fond of losing by this trade as ourselves. As to the Dutch, they seem to entertain a very different opinion upon the subject, and were probably, on this account, not mentioned by Mr. Ramfay. The States of Hoiland and West Friesland have declared,—“ that the trade to the
 “ West Indies is of the utmost consequence
 “ to the republic, and one of the chief
 “ means of the support of its inhabitants,
 “ &c. and that the prosperity of the Colo-
 “ nists, *without doubt*, depends on the
 “ plentiful supply of slaves, and that con-
 “ sequently every means should be adopted
 “ to render this supply equal to the wants
 “ of the colonies.”—Now that such a number of merchants and planters of different nations should persist, year after year, in a losing trade, is so extraordinary a phenomenon in commerce, that one cannot but suspect some fallacy or error in whatever arguments are offered to establish it.

* Clarkson's Impolicy of, &c. p. 110.

But

But although the Slave Trade should not be a losing one, yet it is said to be *clearly unnecessary*, for the following reasons:—

1, Sugar might be cultivated by Europeans.

2, Much labour might be saved by introducing our implements of husbandry.

3, The planters did not suffer by an interruption of the trade for six years.

4, The number of domestic slaves might be reduced.

5, The stock of negroes might be kept up by breeding.

6, That in Jamaica an actual increase by population is begun.

That sugar may be raised by Europeans is * said to be fully proved by Robertson's Tracts and the Histories of the Islands. I have never met with Robertson's Tracts, nor with any person who has seen them; but I have looked into Du Tertre and Ligon, and have also considered the obser-

* See Mr. Ramfay's evidence, Priv. Co. Rep. part iii. tit. Further Evidence, &c.

vations of Messrs. Fuller and † Spooner upon those authors, and am myself convinced that sugar never was raised by Europeans. Many of our Admirals, all the Agents, Legislators, and Governors of the Islands, have declared their opinion that it is impossible ‡. But I presume it to be perfectly immaterial whether it is or is not practicable : because, if I but suspected that any such plan was seriously thought of, or could ever be permitted, that an annual emigration of eight or ten thousand British labourers (or even half that number) could possibly be one of the consequences of the Abolition Bill, this single consideration would determine me at once to give it the utmost opposition ; and I doubt not but most Members of Parliament would shew themselves to be of the same opinion.

2, I once gave great credit to the assertion, that the cultivation of the islands might be considerably aided by our imple-

† Priv. Co. Rep. part v. tit. Grenada and St. Christopher. C. No. 7, 8. and part iii. Jamaica Appendix.

‡ See Priv. Co. Rep. Appendixes to the several islands, letter A. No. 37. 38. and part iii. tit. Further evidence, &c.

ments of husbandry ; but the Privy Council Report contains such a body of evidence against it, that I doubt if the plough, or any other farming implements, can be introduced to much extent or advantage, except in Jamaica only.

Every part of the cultivation of the islands is condemned by Mr. Botham*, who has given a very clear account of the method of raising sugar in Java, by free labourers, who work task-work. But the emancipation of our negroes is not contended for ; and the nature and surface of the soil in our islands render it highly improbable that the practice recommended by Mr. Botham should succeed. He describes indeed an instrument for earthing up the canes, which promises to be serviceable, and at least merits an experiment.

Mr. Ashley † used the plough, for one year, in breaking up some fresh ground,

* See his evidence, Priv. Co. Rep. part iii. tit. Cultivation of Sugar, No. 3.

† See his evidence, Priv. Co. Rep. part iii. tit. Jamaica, No. 9.

and

and more than doubled the usual crop of his estate. But this was the experience of a single year, and that a remarkable yielding year *, upon fresh ground, and in Jamaica; where, from the great quantity and variety of soil, much may be found fit for the plough, and where the use of the plough is daily increasing, and will probably be carried to the utmost extent, whether the Abolition Bill succeed or not. In Barbadoes, Grenada, St. Christopher, Dominica, St. Vincent, and Antigua, the plough has been tried and abandoned †; and what weighs particularly with me is, that Col. Martin ‡, who strongly recommended the use of the plough in Antigua, did himself give it up after the experience of some years ||. It appears also from the evidence §, that spades, wheel-barrows,

* 1785, said to have been so by Mr. Ashley, *ibid*.

† See the Appendixes to these islands, letter A. No. 42. 47.

‡ Author of a very useful treatise on the management of sugar plantations, written with much good sense and humanity.

|| See Dr. Adair's evidence, Priv. Co. Rep. Antigua Appendix, letter A. No. 42.

§ See the Appendixes, letter A. No. 42.

three-wheeled carts, &c. have been tried and laid aside at the desire of the negroes, who prefer * the hoe, the bill, and the basket, to any other implements.

Even were the evidence to this point less convincing than it is, still as very many of the West Indian Land-Owners are educated and pass much of their time in this country, it could not be believed but several of them must have observed upon our methods and improvements in husbandry, and have tried to turn them to account upon their own estates. If some men adhere too obstinately to old customs, there are others equally fond of experiment and innovation; and I believe few of the sciences have produced more projectors than agriculture. When therefore we affect to dictate new modes of cultivation to the planters, and blame them for not sparing their slaves

* I once heard a planter attribute this preference to the natural make of the negroes, who are generally strong in the arms, chest, and shoulders, but narrow in the loins. In using the spade and wheel-barrow, the labour falls chiefly upon the loins; but whether more than their hoe, bill and basket, I do not pretend to judge.

by

by using our tools, I suspect that we undertake to teach what we do not understand, and condemn them for neglecting means which they have already proved to be ineffectual.

3, The interruption of the supply of slaves during the war is mentioned by Mr. Ramsay *, and strongly relied on by Mr. Clarkson †. The facts stated are,—that the number of slave-ships employed in 1772 was 175.

In 1777 no more than 58

1778 41

1779 28

At which last period the trade may be considered as nearly abolished. That in 1772 the sugar imported was 1,766,422 cwts; and 1,444,943 in 1779. The difference (324,479 cwts.) Mr. Clarkson imputes to captures by the enemy, and therefore concludes, that as much sugar was made (though not imported) after the supply of slaves was cut off, as before.—I cannot assent to this conclusion, because

* Objections to the Abolition, with Answers, p. 41.

† Impolicy of the Slave Trade, p. 125.

324,479 cwts. is nearly a fourth part of the sugars annually imported during the eight years, viz. from 1772 to 1779; which seems to be allowing too much for the captures. But admitting this to be so, it does not appear that the supply of slaves *was* *materially* interrupted prior to the year 1779. For the annual demand for slaves in *our* islands may be taken at 15,000, and Mr. Clarkson estimates * the average number of slaves in a British ship at 360, which is certainly too high. But taking them at 300, the 58 ships in 1777 carried 17,400 slaves; the 41 ships in 1778 might have 12,300; and even the 8000 slaves, which were probably brought by the 28 ships in 1779, afforded the planters half of the usual supply. There can be no doubt but that, during the war, the slave ships had every possible encouragement to go to our own islands in preference to any other; and if they did so, where was the interruption for six, or five, or even four years? I can believe a partial interruption for one or two would not be felt. Nothing can prove this supposed interruption, but an account of the slaves imported in every year from 1772 to 1779. No such account has been given in

* Impolicy of the Slave Trade, p. 78.

evidence, and if it cannot be procured, this fact can never be established.

4. The stocks of working slaves might probably be immediately increased by turning some household servants into the fields ; but when I am told * that *ordinary* families keep from twenty to forty of this sort, I doubt a little if the description be just, and wish to enquire further into the œconomy of a plantation. The merely living or being employed in the house, instead of the field, does not make them house-servants, in the sense required for this argument ; and if their business in or about the house consists in matters relative to the plantation (such as the stores, books, slaves or cattle), they are not properly household, but plantation servants. A few vain, or extravagant men, may entertain some useless domestics, but the moderate will not desire, and the inferior planters cannot afford, to imitate them : besides, might not the change from house-service to field-labour operate in many instances as a second seasoning ? and so far both masters and slaves would be sufferers by this plan. At best, this expe-

* Mr. Wilberforce's Speech, p. 32.

cient is only partial, and suggested as a temporary substitute in room of the annual supplies, until a new generation shall be reared; unless therefore it can be shewn that the stock of slaves can be supported by breeding, this fourth reason against the necessity of the Slave Trade falls to the ground.

5. It has been repeatedly asserted, that the Abolition Bill will compel the masters to treat the slaves well, and that the slaves by being well treated will increase, or at least support their number by breeding. The first position has been already discussed *. In order to judge rightly of the second, we must consider the causes which are supposed or admitted to have hitherto impeded the natural increase.

One of the allowed causes is—*that there are fewer women than men slaves.*

The obvious remedy would be, some mode of encouraging the importation of a greater proportion of women †: but as the abolition

* Fo. 34.

† I am however convinced, both by the evidence and the manners of the Africans, that in whatever

abolition of the Slave Trade is to stop all importation, the advocates for the bill affect to consider this circumstance but of little consequence, and say, that—"the births to be expected from an addition of the proper number of women would be no more than three hundred*." To support this estimate would require a very nice and difficult calculation, even if the disproportion between the sexes, in all the islands, were exactly ascertained: but as no such account appears †, I cannot
 imagine

manner the trade is carried on, there will be always fewer women than men brought to market. Sec Priv. Co. Rep. at the end of title *Slaves*.

* Mr. Wilberforce's Speech, p. 30.

† The evidence to this point in the Priv. Co. Rep. stands as follows :

In Antigua, there is *believed* to be one third less of women than men.

Montserrat, the proportion is *believed* to be nearly equal.

Nevis, women are to men as 5 to 4.

Grenada, A. D. 1783, 14,438 men to 10,182 women. Part iii. Appendix, A. No. 28.

Dominica, A. D. 1788, 8116 men to 6851 women. Part iv. tit. Population, No. 6.

Of the disproportion in Jamaica, Barbadoes, St. Christopher and St. Vincent, there is no evidence.

Mr.

imagine in what manner, or upon what grounds, this estimate has been made. I am aware that, if the importation should be effectually prohibited, this disproportion between the sexes must, by the course of nature, cease; but, in the mean time, it must operate to a certain degree against the support of the stock by breeding; and although at the end of twenty years there should be as many women as men, yet the total stock of negroes may have suffered a most ruinous decrease.

A second allowed cause * is, *the dissoluteness of manners that prevails among the negroes*. It appears from the evidence †, that they are debilitated by premature and promiscuous commerce, enervated by the immoderate use of new rum, and that the women frequently attempt to preserve their persons in request by procuring abortions ‡. It is not easy to conceive how better treat-

* Mr. Wilberforce's Speech, p. 60.

† Priv. Co. Rep. Part iii. Appendix to each island, A. No. 15.

‡ Priv. Co. Rep. Part iii. Antigua Appendix, A. No. 11.—Labat, Voy. aux Isles, Part ii. chap. vi.

ment in the articles of provisions and labour is to produce a reform in these points; or how more food and less work is to render the negroes less drunken or lascivious.

Another cause * alleged is, *the want of proper regulations for the encouragement of marriages*. It appears from the evidence † that the planters in general wish to have their negroes marry on their own estates, and to one wife only, but they do not think it prudent to interfere. Particular privileges or bounties might induce the negroes to contract marriage; but so rooted is their attachment to polygamy, that there seems to be no probability of procuring the observance of conjugal fidelity by any privileges or bounties which could be afforded. If by "*proper regulations*," it is meant that the planters, managers, and a sufficient number of able missionaries shall unite their endeavours to work a general reform, and persuade the negroes to become good Christians, and renounce polygamy; I doubt

* Mr. Wilberforce's Speech, p. 60.

† Priv. Co. Rep. Part iii. Appendix to each island, A. No. 14.

the progress of such a plan would be imperceptibly slow, and indeed the plan itself seems too speculative to be at all depended on as a source of population.

A fourth cause alleged is—*that the breeding and rearing of children is not encouraged.* By the laws of Jamaica *, the overseer of every plantation, on which there has been a natural increase of slaves within the year, is intitled to a premium on every child born on the plantation within the year, and living on the 28th of December. In all the islands, the common practice is to allow pregnant and nursing women to go out to labour an hour later, and leave off an hour sooner than the other slaves †; and they have an additional allowance of provision for their children. If more precise regulations are thought requisite, it would be easy to make them without abolishing the Slave Trade. But Messrs. Chisholme and Quier (both medical men) give it as their

* Priv. Co. Rep. part iii. tit. Jamaica Slaves; for their Regulation, sect. 31.

† Priv. Co. Rep. part iii. Appendix to each island, A. No. 14, 15.

opinion; that, “ the chief obstacle to the
 “ rearing of children, is the inattention, or
 “ ignorance, or obstinacy of the mothers
 “ and nurses; and that those who are
 “ much conversant with the negroes, will
 “ be aware of the difficulty, if not impossibility,
 “ of remedying this evil, so long as
 “ negroes are employed as nurses to the
 “ children *.” That the planters endeavour
 to discourage the women from breeding, by
 treating them harshly for becoming pregnant,
 or with a view to make them miscarry, I cannot believe; because the value
 of a female slave is always enhanced by her
 having children; because, the value of one
 native is equal to that of two imported
 slaves †; and because, it is now pretty well
 known, that all means of procuring abortions
 must endanger the health of the party.

Epidemic diseases are the last cause I shall
 mention of impediment to the natural in-

* Priv. Co. Rep. part iii. Appendix to Jamaica; No. 6, 8. Barbadoes, No. 15, 17, and Antigua, No. 11.

† See Dr. Adair's Evidence. Priv. Co. Rep. part iii. Antigua Appendix, No. 11.

crease. The planters say, that these are occasioned by unfavourable seasons and the unhealthiness of some situations. The advocates for the Abolition attribute them to unwholesome or insufficient food, and too much labour. It appears from the evidence, that Antigua suffered by drought for seven successive years: in 1779, nearly a fifth of all the negroes died of a dysentery; in 1783 the measles, and in 1786 the chin-cough carried off great numbers*. In Jamaica, only 15,000 slaves are supposed to have perished by hurricanes, from 1780 and 1786†; and these hurricanes were not confined to Jamaica. Surely such losses are fairly imputable to the climate, and are not to be prevented by any human prudence. In the Privy Council Report, no islands or situations are particularized as unhealthy: but admitting that there are such, I can by no means agree with Mr. Ramsay‡, who

* Priv. Co. Rep. part iii. Antigua Appendix, A. No. 15.

† The second Report of the Assembly of Jamaica. Priv. Co. Rep. part iii.

‡ See his evidence in the Priv. Co. Rep. part iii. tit. Further Evidence, &c. respecting the treatment in the West Indies, sect. 7.

thinks, that—" perhaps in every situation
 " the productions of a district are a natu-
 " ral antidote to its unhealthiness." No
 effectual antidote has yet been found against
 the agues prevalent in parts of Kent,
 Essex, and Lincolnshire ; and the best medi-
 cines in those diseases, viz. bark, spices,
 and certain bitters, we know are not pro-
 duced in those districts. The Pontine
 marshes, and their infectious air, have
 baffled the enterprise and experience of
 many ages. As far as bad food or over-
 work may be supposed to have occasioned
 epidemical diseases, they will in all likeli-
 hood be prevented by the regulations
 already mentioned* : but no forecast or
 interest of the planter can effectually secure
 his negroes or himself from some distress,
 whenever, in the same year, the provision-
 grounds fail, and a war has interrupted the
 supply from Europe.

Upon the whole, some of these impedi-
 ments to the natural increase cannot be pre-
 vented at all ; and I doubt if the others may
 not be more immediately and effectually

* Ante. p. 29.

obviated by legal regulations in the islands, than by the circuitous method of abolishing the Slave Trade.

In order to lessen the weight of these objections to the probability of a natural increase, and to prove that the planters may, *if they please*, do without supplies from Africa, Mr. Clarkson has given a short history * of the stock of slaves on twenty-six estates, which, he says, have either increased or fallen off, according as the management has been humane or severe. But Mr. Clarkson has *named* the owners of three of the estates only out of the twenty-six, and those are in foreign islands; not more than three or four of the cases are stated so fully or precisely as to prove the fact; nor has Mr. Clarkson thought fit to give them in evidence to the Privy Council; I cannot therefore consider these instances to be in any degree substantiated. Mr. Nicholls † has also furnished Mr. Clarkson with a list of ten proprietors, on whose estates the stock has been kept up by humane treatment, *to the*

* Essay on the Impolicy of the Slave Trade, p. 82.

† Ibid. p. 85, in the note.

best of Mr. Nicholls's remembrance : but no man's remembrance can be admitted as evidence upon so intricate and fluctuating a subject as population. And Mr. Ramsay has given in evidence to the Privy Council the names of six proprietors, the number of whose slaves has varied with the good or bad management : but Mr. Ramsay's statement of every one of these estates is in some respect defective. This branch of evidence might be greatly improved, if a considerable number of planters would lay before the House the annual returns of their slaves for ten or twenty years past, with such observations as may occur to them upon the climate, and change of managers* : the trouble would not be much, and these lists might elucidate the points of unhealthiness, mortality, and the probability of a natural increase, more than any other evidence that can be produced. At present, the instances mentioned above (though they should be taken for

* I suggest this from an earnest desire of having the best information : but the slaves being property and taxable, the planters may perhaps have private (though not unfair reasons) for declining to furnish these lists.

granted),

granted), amount to no more than forty-two, selected from all the islands, as well foreign as British, which may contain, perhaps, four or five thousand sugar estates ; and I do not think that the example of what may have happened on forty-two estates, does at all shew that the same is probable or practicable on four or five thousand.

As a further proof that good management will always enable the negroes to keep up their numbers by breeding, it has been said, that—" * all sides agree that the treatment is more humane now than it was thirty years ago, and that it is daily improving : that the numbers have increased, or rather the decrease has lessened, in the same proportion as the treatment has improved : for that in Jamaica, from 1768 to 1774, the excess of deaths above births was rather more than 1 per cent. whereas, from 1774 to 1787, the excess has been only about three-fifths per cent. and that all this appears from authentic documents."

* Mr. Wilberforce's Speech, p. 28 and 6c.

I own I have not taken the pains of proving the result from this calculation, because I think none of the documents, from which it is formed, are to be depended upon.

The first document is, an answer from the Council of the island to one of the questions sent by the Privy Council *, it states that, “ in 1768, from the most accurate account “ that could be had, it is *supposed* there were “ 166,914 negroes in the whole.” It is sufficiently obvious that a supposition (especially in a question of population), founded on accounts collected at the distance of twenty years, in a country where the principal account (the poll-tax) is acknowledged to be irregularly levied †, can be at the best but a very vague conjecture.

The second document is—a list ‡ of 1774, given in by governor Keith, which states the number to be 192,787. But as the go-

* See the Report, part iii. tit. Jamaica, A. No. 48.

† See the Observation made by Gov. Keith, and the Committee of Assembly, Priv. Co. Rep. part iv. tit. Population, No. 1. Jamaica.

‡ Priv. Co. Rep. part iv. tit. Population, No. 1. Jamaica.

vernor adds, that “ there were many job-
 “ bers and others, who did not give in their
 “ negroes, which might amount to 10,000
 “ at the least.” This certainly is not an
 enumeration on which Dr. Price, or any
 other writer on population, would venture
 to conclude within one or three-fifths per
 cent.

The next is,—a * list sent by governor
 Clarke, which states the number in Decem-
 ber 1787 to be 256,000 ; but the second
 report of the Assembly of Jamaica, which
 certainly does not aim at *under-rating* the
 number, states, that “ after diligent inves-
 “ tigation, we judge the number on the
 “ 30th of December 1787, to be 240,000 at
 “ least.”—A difference of 15,000 between
 these two lists, made up to the same period,
 impeaches the accuracy of both.

The next is—† accounts of negroes im-
 ported and exported from 1768 to 1774,

* Priv. Co. Rep. par. iv. tit. Population, No. 1.
 Jamaica.

† Priv. Co. Rep. part iii. tit. Jamaica, at the end
 of the Appendix.

inclusive,

inclusive, given in by Mr. Fuller ; and from 1775 to 1787, inclusive, given in by the Inspector General. But Mr. Fuller's account ends with 1775, and the Inspector General's account begins only with 1783 *, consequently, there is a chasm of seven years, viz. from 1776 to 1782, both inclusive, and the calculation, as far as it depends upon the imports and exports of negroes, appears to be wholly unfounded.

The last document is—the estimate of $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. supposed to perish between the entry of every ship, and the sale of the slaves, as stated in the second Jamaica Report. My reasons for doubting the truth of this estimate have been given in another place † : I shall only observe here, that the difference of decrease, intended to be established by the calculation now under consideration, is only between one per cent. and

* Priv. Co. Rep. last Appendix, paper B. sect. iv. where the Privy Council says, this account by the Inspector, could not be obtained for any time prior to 1783.—N. B. I have not found in the report any other accounts than these two.

† P. 43.

three-fifths per cent. consequently, if the Jamaica report has over-rated the loss between entry and sale only the bare half per cent. this half per cent. added to the three-fifths, exceeds the one per cent. and turns the difference the other way ; or at least leaves the whole matter in darkness and confusion.

Such are the documents brought to prove, that in Jamaica the excess of deaths above births have been one per cent. from 1768 to 1774, and three-fifths per cent. from 1775 to 1787. The calculation would be a matter of some difficulty, even with accurate data ; but those assumed are all exceptionable and inconclusive.

The eleventh resolution, proposed by Mr. Wilberforce, states a result of the same nature, viz. a gradual decrease in the excess of deaths above births, with respect to Barbadoes, from 1764 to 1786.

One of the documents on which this calculation appears to be founded, is free from all objection, I mean, “ * an account of all

* Priv. Co. Rep. part i. tit. Population, No. 3, Barbadoes.

“ the slaves in the island from 1780 to 1786,
 “ made from lists given in upon oath.”
 But at the foot of this account it is observed,
 that “ these lists being given in on oath,
 “ are therefore nearer the truth than the
 “ lists which are sent into the Secretary’s
 “ Office by the churchwardens, and thence
 “ transmitted by the governor.” This ob-
 servation proves the inaccuracy of the lists
 for all the other years, which are only the
 lists by the churchwardens: for instance, in
 the sworn list for 1783*, there are 4821
 more slaves than in the churchwarden’s list†
 for the same year. In Mr. Brathwaite’s
 list ‡ from 1764 to 1780, there is no ex-
 port of slaves stated, though it is admitted
 that some were exported. Mr. Brathwaite’s
 list of the import and export of negroes
 for 1785 and 1786, differs from the list
 given in by the Inspector General for
 those years §. This difference is not great
 in point of number; but in a calculation,

* Priv. Co. Rep. part iv. tit. Population, No. 3,
 Barbadoes.

† Ibid.

‡ Priv. Co. Rep. part iii. Barbadoes, A. No. 15.

§ Priv. Co. Rep. part iv. No. 4.

which

which affects to prove a decrease in population of a $1\frac{1}{2}$ per. cent. at one period, seven-eighths per. cent. at another, and $\frac{1}{2}$ per. cent. at a third, the minutest error in the data is material, because the whole result is itself so minute.

It is admitted, that there are no accounts which afford sufficient grounds for any calculation on the population of the other islands*. Whoever therefore feels himself persuaded

* I learn from Mr. Wilberforce's Speech (p. 31.), that "in Dominica Gov. Orde writes, that there is "a natural increase."—It is very possible that I misunderstand the account transmitted by Gov. Orde (see Priv. Co. Rep. part iv. tit. Population. No. 6. Dominica), for to me there appears upon the face of it to be a great loss.

1780 negroes in the island,	12,713
1788 Do. - - - - -	14,967

Increase in eight years 2254

But from 1784

to

1788,

there were imported and remained in the island 11,772; so that this increase of 2254 seems to have been produced by an import of five times that number. There are many other objections to the account; but I shall not dwell upon them, because I mistrust my own ap-

persuaded by the foregoing calculation, that the stock of negroes may be supported by breeding in Jamaica and Barbadoes, should require some evidence of the same nature before he pronounces the same opinion upon all the other islands: for nothing is so fallacious in political arithmetic as to draw general conclusions from partial observations; one might as well infer from the known increase of inhabitants in Yorkshire and Lancashire, that the population of this whole kingdom is augmented, as that the circumstances *supposed* to have taken place in Jamaica and Barbadoes, have also happened in the other islands *. And we must also recollect, that in an extensive kingdom like this, any decrease of population in one quarter may be easily recruited from another; whereas, in the West-Indies, when the supplies from Africa are cut off, the stock

prehension of it, and because the gentleman who has quoted it, seems to have doubts too, and does not rely upon it.

* I have been told, the islands differ very much in climate and produce; that some are supposed more liable to hurricanes, and others to epidemical diseases. Antigua, I believe, depends upon the rains for all its fresh water.

of

of negroes, on any one island, may be irreparably reduced by the hurricanes, or disease or drought of a single year.

It has indeed been said, that * “ from a
 “ consideration of the means obviating the
 “ causes which have hitherto impeded the
 “ natural increase, &c. it appears that no
 “ considerable or permanent inconvenience
 “ would result from stopping the importa-
 “ tion of slaves.”—I presume these means
 (whatever they are) will be applied to all
 the islands, and then the argument seems
 to stand as follows:—The consideration of
 certain means, *joined with the result* of a
 long calculation on the population of Ja-
 maica and Barbadoes, is sufficient to assure
 us against any inconvenience in *those*
 islands: therefore the consideration of the
 same means only, *without any result* or cal-
 culation, should give us the same assurance
 with respect to all the *other* islands. In
 truth, one cannot suppose that so much pains
 would have been bestowed upon this calcu-
 lation, if it were not thought material; but

* Mr. Wilberforce's Speech, p. 63.—The Twelfth Resolution.

if it is material as to the islands of Jamaica and Barbadoes, why is it immaterial as to all the rest?

I have now gone through the principal arguments which have been brought to prove, 1, That the Slave Trade is unnecessary; 2, That the impediments to a natural increase are either unimportant, or in the planter's power to remove; and, 3, That they may be compelled to rely upon breeding only for the support of their stock of negroes without danger of any permanent inconvenience. At present, these arguments surely fall far short of conviction. But the points of inquiry, and the evidence wanted, are now fully understood, and means may easily be taken for obtaining from each island such lists of the import and export of the births and deaths of slaves, as shall, in the course of a few years, turn speculation into moral certainty, and put this very important question of a natural increase beyond all doubt.—Where a mistake may occasion infinite mischief, it is our duty to delay.

The

The Objections to the Abolition of the Slave Trade come next under consideration ; and I shall only mention such as seem to be of real importance, and hitherto unanswered.

1, I presume no one will deny the Abolition to be an *experiment* which *may* materially affect the trade and marine strength of the nation. Its most zealous advocates do not pretend to assure us of any certain gain, and it is evident that we shall suffer some immediate loss in the articles of revenue, exports, sailors and shipping.

Now, when I consider the great amount of the national debt ; that the annual expenditure is not yet reduced within the annual income ; that, notwithstanding the late able and successful management of the revenue, the resources for carrying on any future war are by no means too obvious or numerous ; and yet, for the last fifty years, the intervals of peace have never exceeded ten or twelve years ; taking all these circumstances together, I cannot bring myself
to

to think this a fit time, or that the country is in a fit situation to engage in an experiment, which offers a prospect of certain loss, and no probability of gain ; which will instantly annihilate a trade that annually employs * 5000 sailors, from 120 to 140 ships, and exports between 700,000 and 800,000*l.* and which same experiment may not improbably bring the West India trade to decay ; the annual exports and imports, of which generally exceed 5,000,000*l.* with the employment of 130,000 *tons* of shipping and sailors in proportion. All objects too considerable to be even hazarded upon an unnecessary or doubtful speculation.

Very flattering statements have indeed been set forth of the natural riches and produce of Africa ; but Mr. Teafte's evidence † lets us into the other side of the account. He is engaged in this branch of trade and would consequently be glad to have it improved. Yet he tells us, that the import of woods is at present equal to the de-

* Priv. Co. Rep. part iv. No. 10.

† Priv. Co. Rep. part i. tit. Produce.

mand :—half of the ivory* (the most valuable return) imported comes home in the slave ships, and could not be brought any other way : more gold might be got, but it cannot be bought to profit †. Upon the whole, Mr. Teaste goes on with this trade, because he is in it ; but if his capital was out, he would not now go into it. Yet this is a trade which, we are assured, may be made to recompense us for the loss of the Slave Trade. And how is this recompense to be obtained ? why, Europeans must encourage the natives, by example, to cultivate tobacco, cotton and indigo : but encouragement and example have both been tried without effect ‡.

Per-

* Ivory would not pay for bringing down to the coast, unless it was brought by the slaves for sale. See Mr. Barnes's evidence at the Bar of the House of Commons.

† Because the slave ships buy it up to carry on their trade on the leeward coast. See Capt. Deane's evidence, Priv. Co. Rep. part i. tit. Produce. N. B. This must be the case as long as *any* slave ships frequent that coast.

‡ By M. Bruc (Director of the French African Company), who tried to persuade two black chiefs to cultivate tobacco, they seemed to admit the profit they

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might

Perhaps it will be said, that these undertakings were all badly planned; for that Colonization is the only probable method of extending the interior trade, increasing the natural produce, and civilizing the inhabitants *.

Should such a plan be seriously proposed, it will be necessary to enter a little into the detail, to know something of the probable expence, the number of colonists, the situation and size of the intended settlement; and also to inquire if civilization has ever been, or is likely to be, effected by colonization without conquest. For my own part,

might expect from it; but their indolence was insurmountable. *Relat. de l'Afr. Occid. par Labat. vol. iii. p. 203.*

By the Dutch at Axim, who tried to make them cultivate cotton. See Mr. Weuves's evidence, *Priv. Co. Rep. part i. tit. Produce, and part vi. tit. Holland.*

The Portuguese had formerly two Indigo works in Sierra Leone, which came to nothing. See Mr. Matthews's evidence, *Priv. Co. Rep. part i. tit. Produce.*

By Mr. Matthews and another trader, who offered the natives at the rate of nine-pence per pound for uncleaned cotton, *ibid.*

* Sir Geo. Yonge, Dr. Spaarman, and Mr. Wadstrom, are of opinion, that there is no other method. See their evidence, *Priv. Co. Rep. part i. tit. Produce.*

when

when I find, both from books and the evidence, that the climate is particularly fatal to Europeans*; that the natives are sanguinary, rapacious, treacherous and indolent; extremely jealous of their rights on the coast, and every where averse from suffering Europeans to penetrate into the interior country †; when Mr. Paplett ‡, who proposes a colony, says, that “the town must be secured by a ditch, otherwise the natives would kill the colonists

* See Churchill's Coll. of Voyages, vol. v. p. 32. 77. 110. and vol. vi. p. 205. 215. Mr. Brue lost in six years 157 out of 180 Europeans.

Our African company, from 1751 to 1788, sent out 1080 servants, military and civil; out of which 333 died in the first year of their respective arrivals. Priv. Co. Rep. part i. tit. Detached Pieces of Evidence, No. vi.

If the reader will take the trouble of making a just comparison between the returns from the regiments in Africa (Priv. Co. Rep. part i. tit. Special Information, No. 7.) with those from the West Indies (Priv. Co. Rep. part iii. tit. Detached Evidence, No. 1.), he will find the mortality to have been about three-sevenths more in Africa than the West Indies.

† Churchill's Coll. of Voy. vol. i. p. 749. vol. v. p. 34. 100. 462, &c. Bosman, 13. 16. 52. 62. 101. Relat. de l'Afr. Occid. par Labat. vol. ii. p. 233. vol. iii. p. 175. 353.

‡ Priv. Co. Rep. part i. tit. Produce.

“ for the sake of their tools ;” I am at a loss to conceive how a colony, which requires the secure and exclusive possession of a certain extent of country, can be expected to prosper, or even to exist ; especially when the avowed purposes of this colony are, 1, To abolish a trade to which (whether just or unjust) the natives are perfectly reconciled, and by which they at present procure (and may continue to procure from other nations) such European goods as they want ; and, 2dly, To introduce a new trade that aims at making the natives submit to regular labour, from which they are notoriously averse.

2, Our marine force will be diminished by the loss of about 5000 seamen, now annually employed in the slave ships,

And I must insist upon this objection, notwithstanding Mr. Clarkson has undertaken to prove this trade to be a grave, instead of a nursery, for our seamen ; and that his doctrine has been as confidently appealed to *, as if it were a mathematical demonstration.

* Mr. Wilberforce's Speech, p. 36.

The correctness of the muster-rolls produced by Mr. Clarkson is by no means clearly established *; and I am far from satisfied with his method of accounting for the loss of 500 sailors, supposed annually to perish, *or* be left behind, in the West Indies. The alternative is indeed very different to the men, though the same to this country, since, according to Mr. Clarkson, they all either die of disease in the islands, or go to America never to return. But why are they never to return from America? A sailor's course of life does not seem to preclude the possibility of such an event. Many landmen go out in the African ships, why may not these take to their former callings in the islands? The master of every coasting craft in the islands *must* be a white †

* Mr. Clarkson himself must, according to his own reasoning, doubt of the authenticity of these rolls. For he says (Priv. Co. Rep. part ii. tit. Mortality of Seamen), "that he omitted the London muster-rolls, because they were *not upon oath*, and he did not choose to insert any account, the *authenticity of which might be questioned*."—It appears from the Comptroller's answer, that the *Liverpool Rolls* are *not* given in *upon oath*, and consequently may be questioned.

† See information from Mr. Norris, Priv. Co. Rep. part ii. tit. Seamen Employed, &c.

man,

man, surely some of the 500 may be so employed. Mr. Clarkson says,—“ he has “ endeavoured to find out every avenue to “ make them escape ;”—yet he has taken no notice of these circumstances *.

Mr. Clarkson estimates, that “ 240 of the “ failors, who return in the African ships, “ quit the sea-service in disgust, or become “ blind, or die in our hospitals ;” and, to substantiate this estimate, appeals to the Bristol and Liverpool Hospitals. Accounts have been sent † of those hospitals to the Privy Council, from which it appears generally, that the African failors return less healthy than others ; but there are no *data* for any calculation of the numbers diseased.

But, to avoid entering more minutely into Mr Clarkson’s reasoning upon this sub-

* Mr. Wilberforce’s Speech (p. 40.) cites a letter from Gov. Parry as a verification of Mr. Clarkson’s estimate. But the expressions in that letter might be applied to 200, 300, or any other number, as well as to 500. Doubtless many failors are left behind ; but the *number* is the question upon Mr. Clarkson’s estimate.

† Priv. Co. Rep. part ii. tit. Bristol Muster-rolls and Liverpool Muster-rolls.

ject,

ject, I rest my objection upon an error in the inference which he draws from the whole, viz. *that the annual loss of seamen is exactly that loss to our naval strength*; and the error seems to me to consist in this: Mr. Clarkson, to maintain his inference, must consider all our seamen as one *fixed* body composed of a certain number of identical parts, from which he makes deductions for loss, but no allowance for recruits: he assumes it as a fact (without which his whole argument falls to the ground), that if 2000 seamen are lost or disabled in the course of any one year, there will be 2000 fewer seamen fit for service at the end of that year than there were at the beginning of it. Whereas the very reverse is apparently and invariably true. There is a perpetual succession of seamen training up and forming for service, in proportion to the ordinary demand: and the want of sailors, in time of war, is owing to the demand being extraordinary, sudden, and often repeated. Does not our experience for 70 or 80 years past demonstrate this? Whatever has been the annual loss on board of the African ships, those ships have always found sailors

to

to man them ; and this without any detriment or delay to the ships employed in other trades, which have had their complements too. A regiment of 1000 men may lose, in the course of two or three years, twenty or thirty men, and yet, at the end of that time, the regiment may still muster its thousand men. Admitting then that a thousand (or any given number of) men are lost out of the 5000 supposed to be employed in the slave ships, still is that loss continually replacing, still 5000 sailors are annually employed on board the slave ships, and this country has always a body of nearly 5000 sailors to resort to, for the purpose of manning our navy at the breaking out of a war. I do not mean to say, that 5000 sailors are always to be found in the African ships ; but that, in consequence of the annual demand for those ships, a proportionable number of apprentices and landmen are thrown into the sea-service, who would not otherwise be so employed. In a word, if the annual loss of seamen employed in the Slave Trade was a dead loss to our naval strength, that strength must by this time have been wasted down to almost nothing.

I now think myself warranted in asserting, that (notwithstanding Mr. Clarkson's most explicit and unequivocal denial*) *the Slave Trade is one of the nurseries for our navy*. It may be called a grave for those who die in it ; but it is a nursery for those who are annually employed and instructed in it. Five thousand is supposed to be the number ; which, considering the increased attention of the French and Spaniards to their *marine*, seems to be an object of too much importance to be lightly thrown away.

3. I object that our navy will suffer a *relative* as well as a positive loss by the Abolition ; inasmuch as other nations will increase their naval force, by continuing the Slave Trade, when we shall have abandoned it.

One gentleman† is understood to have said, that—" let Great Britain determine as she " will, the guilt and infamy of this trade

* Impolicy of the Slave Trade, p. 49.

† Mr. Beaufoy's Speech, p. 19. (Printed by Phillips.)

“ will not long be endured in France.” Another *, that “ he has every ground for “ believing, nay, that he is sure France will “ not adopt it.” And a third †, that “ France “ is as likely as any nation on the face “ of the globe to catch a spark from the “ light of our fire, and to run a race with “ us in promoting the ends of humanity!” —All this is mere matter of opinion, and I claim no right to contradict the mere opinion of any man ; it is enough for me to maintain the reasonableness of my own.

Applications were made by the Committee of Privy Council to our Ambassadors, Ministers, &c. resident in Portugal, Spain, France and Holland, for any information relative to the Slave Trade. Upon such an occasion, if the governing powers in these countries have really any intention of co-operating with us, or of following our example in the Abolition, it is singular, that some hint to this effect should not have ap-

* Mr. Wilberforce's Speech, p. 44, 45.

† Ibid. p. 75.

peared in the answers *: something like encouragement or approbation might have transpired; and although our application did not directly lead to it, there was certainly an opening for communication. All these courts having been perfectly silent upon the subject, we must search for their sentiments in their conduct, and try to discover if they have adopted any measures favourable to the plan of abolition, or if their subjects have any expectation that they will do so.

The Portuguese do not appear to have made any alterations or improvements in the mode of conducting their Slave Trade; they have neither visited new coasts, nor made new settlements; they derive no assistance from any other nation. Their annual import of the slaves into the Brazils is understood to be pretty regular, and particularly necessary for the working of their mines.

Spain is only making the necessary preparations to a Slave Trade, and both her court and merchants are endeavouring to

* Priv. Co. Rep. part vi.

make themselves acquainted with the best mode of carrying it on.

In 1788, some Spanish merchants went to Manchester and Liverpool to inquire the prices of the goods usually sold to our African merchants, to examine the slave ships, and to put questions as to the probability of any captains or surgeons in the trade being prevailed upon to settle at Cadiz.

In 1786, the Philippine Company obtained an extensive privilege for supplying the continent of South America with slaves.

A royal order, dated 28th February 1789, stating the urgent necessity of supplying the islands with negroes, *without which they could not prosper*, permits them to be imported into the Caraccas, Porto Rico, and St. Domingo, in foreign bottoms duty free, for the precise term of two years, probably in the hope that their own subjects may be by that time able to supply themselves: the port of Cuba is kept shut to all but Spanish ships, and a bounty is given of four dollars per

per slave, imported in Spanish bottoms, by Spaniards on their own account.

Could any government devise better means of encouraging its subjects to undertake and learn a trade?

At present, the Spanish Slave Trade is carried on intirely from Great Britain, by an agent in London for the Philippine Company, and by Mr. Dawson of Liverpool for the Government: but Mr. Dawson admits, that if the Spaniards could obtain proper persons to conduct it, they might carry it on to greater advantage than any other country.

With respect to France.—By an edict of 1784, ships cleared from any port in that kingdom for Guinea, receive a bounty of eighty livres per ton (our ton) and 230 *liv.* per slave imported into St. Dominique, and 166 *liv.* per slave in all the other islands.

British ships with slaves only are admitted into all the French islands, paying a duty of six livres per slave.

Since

Since the peace, the French have a considerable trade from Benin, Whydah and Lago (where they always had some), in the river Bonny (where they formerly had none), and have engrossed the whole trade on the coast of Angola*.

A memorial from our African Company (dated 9th Sept. 1786) complains, that the French had committed various encroachments on the British possessions and trade, and that they were forming settlements at Amoukow and a village near Winnebah.

The National Assembly has twice debated, and finally rejected, † an application for a committee to enquire into the state of the French colonies. In neither debate was a single word said relative to the slaves or Slave Trade. This silence certainly shews, that there is no great ardor for the Abolition; but it would be too much to construe it into

* This is confirmed by the evidence of Captain Domett of the Pomona, and Mr. Penny, Priv. Co. Rep. part i. tit. Slaves.

† On the 1st and 3d of December. See *Mercure de France*, 1789, No. 50.

a disapprobation of the measure. The National Assembly has done so much business, and has so much more to do, that its silence, on this occasion, may be fairly imputed to an unwillingness to enter upon a new and difficult subject.

The British African merchants have a considerable share in the French Slave Trade. Several ships having taken in an assortment of goods here, go to the ports of France, and take French officers, and two thirds of the crew on board; but the supercargo and surgeon are British. The number of these ships is not specified; but this trade is increasing very much. There is some transfer of property, but the real interest is British. The negroes, which they take to the French islands, are paid for either in specie or produce, which last they bring back to France, on account of the adventure. There is another mode, viz. by contract, for the delivery of slaves to French ships on the coast of Africa*.

The

* Some persons may imagine, that as all the Spanish, and a considerable part of the French Slave Trade is in
our

The information from Holland lies in a narrow compass, but is perfectly explicit and to the point. Petitions from the planters of Berbice, Essequibo, and Demerary state, that their plantations are falling to decay through the want of negroes, and therefore pray that they may be imported in foreign bottoms.

A resolution of the states of Holland and West Friesland (dated the 11th of May 1788) states, that “ the *existence* of the
“ colonies, and the prosperity of the planters will always depend on the greater or
“ less supply of slaves ; as the advantages,
“ deriving from them to the mother country, will always be greater or less in proportion as the Slave Trade be exclusively
“ carried on by the subjects of the state :
“ for that an admission of strangers to a
“ participation of it, would not only be

our hands, a prohibition of fitting out slave ships from our ports, will *so far* abolish the trade in *those* countries. But the activity and intelligence of our merchants are not to be baffled by such an obstacle. The slave ships will be kept in France, and the assortments will be sent from hence. It appears that this has been done in some instances already.

“ dangerous,

“ dangerous, but even destructive. That
 “ those who supply the planters with slaves
 “ will, if they choose, be paid in the pro-
 “ ductions of the colonies * in defiance of
 “ the severest penalties !—The states there-
 “ fore object to the admission of foreign
 “ vessels, and recommend that every means
 “ should be employed to promote a speedy
 “ enlargement of the Slave Trade, in pro-
 “ portion to the wants of the planters, and
 “ that no trouble or expence should be
 “ spared, till a sufficient number of slave
 “ ships are fitted out for this purpose !”

I have acknowledged the eminent abilities of the leading advocates for the Abolition in Parliament ; but Holland must have men of ability too ; and if any one nation may be supposed to be better qualified than another, to judge of the advantages of a carrying trade, and the best means of extending and securing it, it must surely be the Dutch.

* We have just seen, that our ships employed in the French trade do bring back some of the payments in produce.

This is the sum of foreign information. If any man can discover in it the slightest intention on the part of the governments of those countries, or the smallest expectation in the people, that *their* Slave Trade will be abolished; if any man can even avoid perceiving a deliberate design in them all to extend it to the utmost of their knowledge and power, his opinion must either be founded on private intelligence, or guided by some very extraordinary rule of reasoning. We indeed live in an age of revolutions; and nothing less than a complete revolution in the sentiments and proceedings of other states, seems likely to bring about an abolition of *their* Slave Trade.

But if they do not *abolish* their own trade, they will certainly endeavour to extend it, by getting into their hands as great a share of ours as they can. The consequences of such a change are equally obvious and formidable.

Four of our admirals * have expressly

* Lord Rodney and Admirals Parker, Barrington and Rowley, Priv. Co. Rep. part iii. tit. Further Evidence, &c.

given

given it as their opinion, that “ the French
 “ West India trade is the principal source
 “ of their naval power, and what enabled
 “ them to man their navy in the last
 “ war.”—This evidence is decisive, but general ; let us endeavour to form some precise idea of the number of sailors which the French and Spaniards * may gain by the proposed change in our system of commerce, by our withdrawing from a trade which we may be said at present to command.

The French slave ships are large (commonly six hundred tons), and carry nearly double the number of men which ours do of the same burthen. I will however state the crew in a much lower proportion, and allow no more than twenty-five men to every hundred tons†. We at present employ from 120 to 150 vessels in the African trade ; and, considering the great activity

* I confine myself to these nations, as the only rivals of our naval power.

† Our slave ships commonly carry seventeen men to every hundred tons. See the Collector of Bristol’s Answer, Priv. Co. Rep. part ii. tit. Bristol Muster-Rolls.

lately shewn by the French to extend their Slave Trade, and the connections they have established in this country, it seems nowise unreasonable to suppose, that they may immediately add thirty ships to their present number, the crews of which (at 150 men per ship) amount to 4500.

The Spaniards, were they left to themselves, would, in all likelihood, not gain a single ship or seaman by our abolition. But we have seen their eagerness to engage in this trade; they have been tampering with our manufacturers and officers, and both their government and Philippine Company have connections in the African trade at London and Liverpool. For these several reasons I think it may be fairly estimated, that in the course of two or three years the Spaniards may acquire half as many additional ships and seamen as the French. Here there will be an acquisition of nearly seven thousand sailors, to the only two marine powers we have to fear; and as we shall have withdrawn about five thousand men (now annually employed in our slave ships) from our own naval force, by this inverse ratio of loss and gain, the difference in their
scale

scale of naval importance, will be in effect about twelve thousand. A further acquisition of seamen will be made by the produce which the negroes, imported in these additional ships, will raise. According to Mr. Clarkson's calculation *, every importation of nine hundred effective slaves, occasions the employing of one new ship, and twenty-five seamen. This can be no great object, perhaps not more than five hundred men; but then it is to be considered, that here too there will probably be an inverse ratio of loss and gain: for if the experiment of the Abolition fails in any part respecting the negroes now in the islands, if the planters do not in fact keep up their flock of slaves, their produce, and the ships to bring home that produce, must necessarily decrease.

I have indeed heard it said, that “ it is
 “ our duty to do right and prevent evil,
 “ without attending to the conduct of
 “ others.”

* Essay on the Impolicy of, &c. p. 78.

Besides that the two principal points in dispute, viz. the sin and mischief of the Slave Trade, are here taken for granted,—a full discussion of this precept of political morality would require a volume. It is therefore by no means the evident *duty* of the British legislature to abolish the Slave Trade; and for myself, as an individual member of that legislature, I feel it *my first* duty to take care *ne quid detrimenti capiat resp.* that her strength, her resources, her means of defence and existence, are not hastily or uselessly diminished; and still more, to guard against any of those means being transferred to the envious rivals of her wealth and power. This, in *my* mind, will be doing right and preventing evil, the greatest *political* evil, a DECAY of NATIONAL STRENGTH.

4. I object that it will be extremely difficult (I think impossible) to prevent THE CLANDESTINE IMPORTATION of slaves into our islands; and yet, if this is not effectually done, the Abolition Bill will do nothing more than raise the price
of

of the slaves upon the planter, and of the produce upon us.

Mere accident afforded me an opportunity of obtaining some information on this part of the subject, from two gentlemen, whom I know to be perfectly well acquainted with all the islands except Jamaica; and I have the more credit in the information they did give me, because to some of my questions, which pointed at particular modes of smuggling, they excused themselves from giving any answers *.

From them I learned, that “ St. Eustatia,
 “ St. Thomas, and St. Bartholomew, are
 “ most likely to become the principal mar-
 “ kets; whence the slaves will be distributed
 “ into the British islands, either directly or
 “ intermediately, by stopping at such of
 “ the French islands as are more conveniently situated for this purpose: that it is
 “ not likely the French should shut their

* My readers are certainly at liberty to believe that I have been imposed upon; but I hope they will not suspect me of any design to impose upon *them*.

“ ports

“ ports against foreign ships engaged in this
 “ trade, since they would then deprive
 “ themselves of frequent opportunities of
 “ purchasing slaves. The islands have many
 “ bays, and the leeward coasts of most of
 “ them are accessible to boats for leagues to-
 “ gether. St. Kitt’s and Nevis will be most
 “ conveniently supplied from St. Eustatia
 “ and St. Bartholomew ; the Virgin Islands
 “ from St. Thomas ; Antigua and Mont-
 “ ferrat from Guadaloupe and the Saints ;
 “ Dominica from Martinique, Guadaloupe,
 “ or St. Lucia ; Barbadoes, St. Vincent, and
 “ Grenada from St. Lucia, Martinique, or
 “ Tobago ; the smaller Grenadines will
 “ often serve as resting-places, where the
 “ navigation is so difficult that the revenue
 “ cutters can hardly venture with safety,
 “ and whence the slaves may very easily be
 “ past in boats to Grenada and St. Vincent ;
 “ but when connections are formed, and
 “ plans established, the Planters of Grena-
 “ da, for example, will think little of the
 “ additional expence of supplying them-
 “ selves even from St. Thomas or St. Eu-
 “ statia ; the vessels stopping (if necessary)
 “ for refreshment, information, or greater
 “ privacy

“ privacy at some of the foreign islands,
 “ where intelligence and orders will be left
 “ for the masters.”

I questioned them as to the preventive means which might be used on shore.— They spoke very lightly of the fidelity or courage which could be expected from the revenue officers, exposed to strong temptation for connivance on the one hand, and on the other to the general resentment of the inhabitants if they do their duty.

Powers of visiting and searching estates, they admitted might be given. But, in the day time, a stock of negroes is too widely dispersed to be speedily and correctly collected and numbered: in the night, such search without notice might be dangerous, and with notice wholly ineffectual.

Penalties for being in possession of newly imported slaves would not be easily recoverable. The negro must be identified by other evidence than his own, and he may have been bought (a seasoned slave) in another British island. Above all, if laws

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of this nature were to be executed in the islands, few actions upon them would succeed ; at the same time, the determination of such actions (even upon an appeal) in England may be thought too grievous a mode to be adopted.

I do not presume to lay this information before the Public as *evidence* ; I offer it only by way of suggesting the necessity of inquiring a little into the practicability of enforcing the intended prohibition of importing slaves into our islands.

Mr. Pitt is understood to have said* :
 “ Great Britain is always able to prevent
 “ an illicit trade of negroes by any other
 “ power to the West Indies :” and Mr. Fox † confirmed and approved the assertion. But general assertions are made upon general principles ; both may be true, without affording sufficient grounds for deciding upon any particular measure. Most certainly, Great Britain is always able to prevent an illicit trade on her own coasts ;

* Mr. Wilberforce's Speech, p. 70.

† Ib. p. 74.

and I have no doubt, but plans well calculated for this purpose have been proposed to the Treasury Board ; but, probably, the certain expence was too large to make it worth while to hazard the experiment. I therefore think, that upon the present occasion, Parliament has a right to expect something more precise than a general assertion of the power of Great Britain ; some outline of the manner in which that power is to be employed ; some detail of the plan intended to enforce this part of the Abolition Bill ; and (above all) some estimate of the number of Revenue officers and vessels to be employed, and of the probable expence of such an establishment. For it would be idle and disgraceful to pass an act of doubtful event, before we have a reasonable assurance of its being not only politic, but practicable.

5. My last objection to the Bill (as a political measure) is, its being for *abolishing*, instead of *regulating*, the Slave Trade.

All regulation of this trade is said, or rather supposed, to be impossible. But be-

cause some injudicious expedients may have been proposed, can no good ones be devised? If we really owe the greater number of our slaves to wars and kidnappers, excited and encouraged by our own people, have we no means of checking or punishing their misconduct? It has been well observed *, that "the real difference between
 " superior and ordinary minds, is the fa-
 " culty of distinguishing between the *Ar-*
 " *duous* and the *Impossible*." To pronounce without trial, a difficult undertaking to be impossible, is the language of indolence and timidity: yet we talk of founding colonies in the pestilential marshes of Africa, and civilizing her savage inhabitants as promising objects of enterprize.

I wish to see the Slave Trade put under humane and effectual regulations; but cannot agree to overturn, at once, a system of commerce which has been constantly increasing for a great number of years to the apparent improvement of our revenue and marine, without having first tried many

* I believe by Card. de Retz.

methods of remedying the exceptionable parts, and preserving the rest.

Two objections remain to be considered. They principally regard the personal safety and interests of the planters.

The great probability that, upon the passing a prohibition of importing negroes, thousands of the slaves will become lazy, incorrigible, and rebellious ; and the dreadful consequences which may ensue from such a change of system in the islands ; are surely to be considered as no trifling objections.

The Abolition Bill will not indeed enfranchise the slaves ; but, coupled with a Prohibition Bill, it may give birth to conflicts, as mischievous as enfranchisement itself.

The Abolition Bill purpoces and professes to enforce indulgence, and the slaves will of course expect it. But does mild treatment, on the part of a master, always produce submission, grateful attachment, and
willing

willing industry on the part of the servant? I fear not, even where the kind usage is voluntary, much less where it is known (perhaps from experience and comparison) to be compelled. Indulgence here means an unusual allowance of rest from labour: *some* unusual rest (particularly in climates that tempt to indolence) creates a desire of *more* rest; and then the struggle begins. The slaves become from indulgence less willing to work, the planter is unwilling to starve, and has recourse to correction; the slaves encourage one another by saying, —“ He dares not punish us as he used to do.” The planter insists, the slaves continue obstinate; at last, the mild treatment must at any rate be abandoned, and that at a time when the slaves are less than ever disposed to bear severity or labour. This progress seems so perfectly natural, this mixture of indolence and insolence on the one side, with temporary indulgence and final compulsion on the other, seems so pregnant with discontent and insurrection, that we shall be justly accountable for whatever mischief happens, unless an additional force is sent to prevent it. It appears from
the

the returns * of the regiments, on the peace establishment in the West Indies, that they were reduced about one-fourth in two years. As the Slave Trade has been opprobriously charged with the extraordinary mortality of the sailors, is it unfair to place the extraordinary mortality in any regiments, which may be sent out on this occasion, to the account of the Abolition Bill? Our anxious humanity for the slaves ought not to extinguish all fears and feelings for our own planters and soldiers: if we carelessly leave the former at the mercy of insurrections, or create a necessity for sending the latter on a service particularly destructive, they may justly tell us, that whatever humanity we may feel for others, we certainly show none to them.

Lastly, The property of the Planters. demands some consideration.

A numerous body of British subjects has vested their property in a part of our dominions, where the lands are cultivated

* Priv. Co. Rep. part iii. tit. Detached Evidence. No. 1.

by particular means, which have been recognized, protected, and encouraged by acts of Parliament : and shall Parliament now, at one stroke, and professing to act on principles of justice, cut off those means, without offering some indemnification for the loss which may ensue ? If the wisdom of Parliament commands the experiment, let its justice give the planters some security that it shall not be made at their sole expence.

The honourable gentleman, who proposed the resolutions*, allowed, that “ He, “ in common with the whole Parliament of “ Great Britain, took shame upon himself, “ for having suffered this horrid trade to be “ carried on under their authority.”— This was modestly said ; and if he had added, that “ Parliament ought to stand to “ a part of the loss,” it would have been also justly said. Fellow-criminals should surely be fellow-sufferers : for, first to tempt, and then to punish the offender, is the extreme of inhumanity and injustice. I admit, that it will be time enough to de-

* Mr. Wilberforce’s Speech, p. 36.

liberate

liberate upon the mode and proportion of re-imbursement, when any material loss shall have been actually sustained : but a parliamentary acknowledgment of the planter's right to *some* re-imbursement, will be, in the mean time, a great support to their credit, and may even prevent loss.

It has been relied upon*, as an unanswerable argument against the possibility of loss to the planters, that “ they can indemnify “ themselves, by the increased price of their “ produce :” but this, I apprehend, will hold good only to a certain price, and for a certain time. During the first operation of the Abolition Bill, many persons will not grudge paying an advance on sugar of two-pence or three-pence a pound ; they will consider it as the price paid for the pleasure of having exercised (as they may think) an act of humanity : but, if in the course of ten or twelve years the produce should considerably fall off, and the price rise in proportion, the pride of Humanity may subside, or be supplanted by indignation against the supposed exactions of mo-

* Mr. Wilberforce's Speech, p. 33.

nopolizing planters. In a word, will the nation long submit to pay two shillings a pound for the sugar, which may be had from Dunkirk for one ?

In truth, the equity of the case seems so clear in favour of the planters, that I strongly suspect, the possible magnitude of the loss is the real objection to its being made good. Was the value of the property in question estimated at 70,000*l.* instead of 70,000,000*l.** government would, I dare say, be more accommodating: but as the State, situated as it is, cannot afford the remedy, it may not be imprudent to deny the right. I only insist, that this is not *justice* ; and that it is a strong objection to the bill itself, that one of its favourite principles must be, in this instance, most glaringly violated.

* So estimated by Mr. Chalmers, first clerk to the Committee of Pr. Co. See the Rep. Part iv. No. 17 and 18.

Mr. Ramfay (*Objections to the Abolition, with Answers*, p. 77.) has protested against the claims of a West-India appraisement of 60,000,000*l.* the estimate of 70,000,000*l.* is official ; but if it were not, I presume no one would appeal to Mr. Ramfay's arguments, against any calculation made by Mr. Chalmers.

I shall

I shall now conclude, with earnestly requesting every Member of Parliament, before he votes on this most important question, to recollect, that

AS THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE IS AVOWED TO BE A MEASURE, NOT OF POLICY BUT HUMANITY, NOT OF ADVANTAGE BUT JUSTICE, NOT OF EXPEDIENCE BUT EXPERIMENT, IT IS THE DUTY OF THE LEGISLATURE TO BE SATISFIED, THAT THE CLAIM OF HUMANITY AND JUSTICE IS WELL FOUNDED; THAT THE EXPERIMENT PROMISES SUCCESS, AND THAT THE INTEREST AND STRENGTH OF THE NATION ARE NOT HAZARDED IN A VAIN PURSUIT OF UNATTAINABLE PURITY AND PERFECTION.